

JANUARY 17, 2005

The American Conservative

EXIT STRATEGY

How to Leave Iraq

By William R. Polk

**Graveyard of the
British Empire**

By Andrew J. Bacevich



Hitchens in the Himalayas
Taki: America's Fifth Column
The Phony Case Against France

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ABSENT VOTERS?

With regard to Steve Sailer's "Baby Gap" (Dec. 20), did he take into consideration the abortion factor? A study of why red states have more population growth than blue states should also include abortion rates per state. On average, blue states have a rate of abortion of 22 out of 1,000 pregnancies. Red states have an average of 13 out of 1,000 pregnancies. Red states are not killing off their unborn at the same rate that blue states are, hence this is as much of a factor, if not more, than the urban exodus of families you mentioned in your article. Just because a family leaves its urban confines doesn't mean they suddenly subscribe to a conservative state of mind any more than a conservative will suddenly become a liberal by a move to the city.

LYNAI TORABPOUR
via e-mail

Steve Sailer replies:

Indeed, red states (with a few exceptions like Nevada and Florida) do tend to have lower abortion rates than blue states with similar racial make-ups. It's hard to prove, however, that abortion has much of an impact on the actual number of live births in a state. A particularly sinister aspect of legalized abortions is that a large fraction of aborted fetuses wouldn't have been conceived without abortion being conveniently available. Economist Steven Levitt of the University of Chicago estimates that 60-75 percent of all unborn babies aborted after *Roe v. Wade* would not have been conceived if abortion had remained illegal. A 2000 Rand Corporation study concluded that legalized abortion lowers the white birthrate by only about 3 percent. So the impact of abortion needs further study.

ARGUING ADORNO

I was pleased to see that *TAC* featured a review of a new critical biography of Theodor Adorno (Dec. 6), particularly

one by Paul Gottfried. Unfortunately, I found the results disappointing.

Gottfried is correct in pointing out that *The Authoritarian Personality* is certainly Adorno at his worst. Yet he greatly exaggerates Adorno's influence on the postmodern, politically-correct American Left. Monsieurs Derrida and Foucault are far more worthy of blame.

Gottfried similarly seems to be out of tune in his dismissive comments on Adorno's "cultural Marxism." Adorno's point was not simply that culture is being commodified, but that what has replaced real folk, popular, and high culture are the trinkets of mass homogeneity and mind-numbing consumerism. This is a street down which a conservative should be willing to travel: when the experience of being a real American is increasingly Wal-Martized, what exactly is it that we conservatives want to conserve?

RICHARD BERTRAND SPENCER
via e-mail

Paul Gottfried replies:

Mr. Spencer is wrong in his details as well as in his questionable judgment that Adorno can help conservatives "conserve." What he describes as "Adorno at his worst" in *The Authoritarian Personality* was all too typical of what he was writing during and after World War II. Studies that Adorno conducted on German "fascist" attitudes after his return to Germany in 1950 are even more ideologically driven and even more anti-bourgeois-Christian than what he had said about Americans. Spencer should consult the biography of Adorno and the voluminous study of the Frankfurt School by Rolf Wiggershaus, which make clear that *TAP* is not an atypical work of Adorno's that reflected wartime bitterness and the need for money.

It was also not without influence in the U.S., and here I refer Spencer to Christopher Lasch's *The True and Only Heaven*, which documents the impact of *TAP* on an entire generation of American social scientists. What Lasch and my

newest book try to show is that Adorno's social engineering project affected Cold War liberals as much as the academic Left.

Finally, I am appalled that Spencer attributes to me by indirection the view that Adorno was a "cultural Marxist." I never apply to him what seems a dubious term. Hating bourgeois civilization and advocating social engineering are not sufficient to demonstrate a Marxist pedigree.

SHARON'S CHOICE

Pat Buchanan's somber assessment of the chances for Mideast peace (Dec. 6) raises the question: will Ariel Sharon be remembered by history as a Charles de Gaulle or a Pieter Botha? De Gaulle, of course, extricated his country from a terrible colonial war in Algeria that nearly destroyed France. Botha assumed the South African premiership in 1978 and promptly announced his commitment to ending apartheid through "moderate reform." At first his plan looked promising, but in the end he could not, as the late writer Alan Paton suggested to me in a correspondence in the early 1980s, manage to "get off the nationalist tiger" he had been harnessed to all of his life. By 1989, his own party stalwarts had dragged him into retirement.

For Sharon, the choice is very clear. Either he will stand up to the obstructionist elements within Likud and work for a just peace between Israel and the Palestinians, or like Pieter Botha he will be seen as someone who squandered an opportunity to improve his country's future.

DAVID L. BLATT
Chicago, Ill.

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[TERROR]

THEY DON'T HATE US FOR OUR FREEDOMS

The Scottish poet Robert Burns wrote, "O would some power the gift give us to see ourselves as others see us." From her sense of possibility to her pioneer ethic, America can claim many fine gifts. But the ability to borrow others' eyes is not one.

Last year, the UN General Assembly took two votes on Israeli policy toward the Palestinians. The first required that Yasser Arafat not be deported or harmed. It passed by a 133 to 4 vote. The other called for the implementation of the roadmap to Mideast peace and condemned Israel's "security fence" on the West Bank. It won approval by a 141 to 4 vote. In both dissents, the U.S. discarded traditional allies to join with Israel, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands, and while Americans likely paid little attention, the rest of the world was watching.

The Wednesday afternoon before Thanksgiving—prime time to bury news—the Pentagon posted online a report by the Defense Science Board. It concluded, contra the administration's talking points, "Muslims do not hate our freedom, but rather they hate our policies." The sore points come as no surprise: "objections to what they see as one-sided support in favor of Israel and against Palestinian rights and the long-standing, even increasing, support for what Muslims collectively see as tyrannies..."

While Americans had been primed by neocon propaganda to expect grateful locals to shower flowers, "There is no yearning-to-be-liberated-by-the-U.S. groundswell among Muslim societies," the panel found. Further, "The critical problem in American public diplomacy toward the Muslim world is a fundamental problem of credibility. Simply, there is none..."



It is power's prerogative to ignore the counsel of lesser voices. "Because we can" carries a sort of rationale—but it comes with a price to be paid in hate or fear. We cannot disregard allies and topple nations then accuse those who fail to love us of despising our goodness. Such is the self-concentration of a spoiled child, not the thoughtful posture of a superpower aiming to preserve her place in the sun.

[MEDIA]

SLAPP HAPPY

Many of us are new fans of Juan Cole, the University of Michigan history prof whose daily blogs on the Iraq War are troves of insight. Cole reads widely in the Arab press and has a Middle Eastern scholar's knowledge of the Muslim religion and political culture, so his commentary has a texture lacking in the Western media.

Cole recently posted pointed words about the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), the organization that provides translations of Arab news that are grist for the mill of neocon commentary: seldom does an off-the-wall Arab comment go uncirculated.

Cole criticized MEMRI for selectively translating the most extremist views in the Arab world and thus painting an unrepresentative and inaccurate picture of political debate. He further speculated on the ideological affinity between

MEMRI and Israel's Likud Party. This seemed like fair comment in the battle over Mideast policy, but what followed was highly unusual: a letter from MEMRI's president Col. Yigal Carmon, late of Israeli military intelligence, threatening a SLAPP lawsuit. (SLAPPs—strategic lawsuits against public participation—are a technique that businesses have used to discourage environmental activists.)

One has to marvel at the sheer gall of it: a foreign (former) intelligence officer attempting to silence by intimidation an American professor who comments in the blogosphere. There is not the slightest doubt that Cole would prevail in any battle of the lawyers, but it's the principle of the thing. Israelis may be accustomed to trying to shut down the expression of opinions they don't like in the occupied territories. But in America, the Bill of Rights still holds sway.

[ECONOMICS]

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS A JOB

Christmas is coming and the goose is getting fat—as are Chinese manufacturers. St. Nick has brought them an early gift, one that means American workers might get coal in their stockings this year. At the end of November, Wal-Mart announced that its stock of Chinese-produced goods was expected to reach \$18 billion this year, up \$3 billion from 2003.

Who needs elves, or American manufacturing, when you have Third World labor?

The Chinese are grateful for the present: *China Business Weekly* quotes Wang Yao, a spokesman for the China General Chamber of Commerce, "Buying more products in China means more job opportunities, which helps the firm win ... the government's heart..." In America, meanwhile, thanks to the world's largest retailer, those "job opportunities" are fast becoming a thing of Christmas past.

[IMMIGRATION]

A VILLAGE WITH BORDERS

While neither Howard Dean nor John Kerry would take *TAC's* advice to get to the right of President Bush on immigration, one big name Democrat seems to have understood the political wisdom of our counsel. While Bush is pushing an amnesty for illegals, what Democrat is saying provocative things like "I am ... adamantly against illegal immigrants," is calling for stepped-up visa and ID systems, and is making pointed comments about the bizarre phenomenon of thousands of day laborers standing around street corners in suburban New York looking to get picked up for a day's wages? None other than that archliberal herself, Hillary Rodham Clinton. (And no, we're not claiming credit for influencing Hillary on the issue).

Political junkies will remember that Bill Clinton got to the right of the Republican Party on welfare reform (and actually passed a pretty good bill). As the Center for Immigration Studies ceaselessly points out, tightening our borders aids those immigrants who are legally here because it helps assimilation and protects the wages of those at the bottom of the job market.

Worth noting too is some of the attention Hillary's toe dipping is getting. One right-wing GOP fundraiser we know

writes, "This would be enough to get my vote and my money behind Hillary Clinton. For America to succeed, it first and foremost needs to be America, not Mexico." We're sure Hillary wouldn't put it quite that way. But any real move on her part towards common-sense, nation-preserving immigration reform will attract lots of attention and serve the national debate well.

[CULTURE]

THEN THERE WERE TWO ...

For all the modern permutations—two mommies, two daddies, step-some-things, and non-custodial whatever—the American family is shrinking. New census figures report that the number of households with five or more people has dropped by half since 1970. The old picket-fence paradigm has moved to a studio apartment.

One- and two-person households are the order of the day—up from 46 percent to 60 percent in three decades—with single women between 30 and 34 tripling over the same time period. The sexual revolution is bearing fruit—or not, as the case may be.

Last year, Gen Xer Ethan Watters coined the term "urban tribes" to describe young, city-dwelling singletons who replace traditional familial functions with sitcom-style ensembles. But these sacrifice the stabilizing, civilizing benefits of marriage and family and don't quite silence that Bridget Jones fear of dying alone and being eaten by Alsatians.

Whispered doubts aside, the trend continues—and, if anything, is accelerating as even recent arrivals conclude that small is beautiful. The *New York Times*, in a piece about declining Latino birthrates, quotes Rocío Yñiguez, who left behind six siblings in Mexico when she settled in California: "You need to work to get ahead, and with children it's too hard." ■

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Do They Know It's Christmas?

"'Tis the season to be jolly." But, as usual, not for all of us. It is the Christmas season, that time in December when all good Christians celebrate the birth of the

Savior of mankind, born in a stable in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago.

It is a time of family gatherings and gift-giving, of joyous music and fond memories. For some, it is one of the two days of the year, Easter being the other, when they return to the old church for the feast day that yet retains its hold upon them from childhood. Even many nonbelievers celebrate, for Christmas joy is contagious.

But not for all. For some, it is not too much to say they hate the idea of Christmas with a deep abiding hate, not just the "Bah, humbug!" dismissal of old Scrooge. They want Christmas dead.

As usual, they are busy at work, going to court to get Nativity scenes expunged from public squares, demanding that statues of Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus be removed from department stores and parades, checking vigilantly to see that any and all caroling at public schools is free of such outrages as "Silent Night." For such as these, even Santa has become an intolerably divisive figure who must be purged from public life.

And this year again they are meeting with some success, especially with a business community for whom Christmas has always been about sales volume not salvation.

Target stores have told the Salvation Army it may no longer station volunteers with their red kettles at store entrances to solicit charitable contributions for the poor. The 30-year tradition that reaped the Army \$9 million a year has been terminated.

The reason, says Target, unconvincingly, is so the company can have a consistent policy of no solicitations outside its stores. But in recent years the gay lobby has pressured Target to ban the Army because it is Christian and rejects homosexuality as sinful.

Now Macy's has stopped using the phrase "Merry Christmas" in all store advertising, replacing it with what Macy's calls the more inclusive "Seasons Greetings" and "Happy Holidays."

But how is it "inclusive" to exclude the Christians' greeting? Is that not anti-Christian? Why would the Macy's of the "Miracle on 34th Street" do such a thing? Why would Federated Department Stores, Macy's parent company, impose such a policy?

By Newton's laws of motion, an object moving in a given direction will continue to do so unless an outside force intervenes. What hidden force intervened to cause Macy's to reverse course and suddenly sever its ties to Christmas? Who insisted that Macy's cease to mention Christmas, the holiday around which its selling season is built?

It is hard to believe some Macy's executive took it upon himself to make so offensive a decision as to expunge "Merry Christmas" from the store when so many of Macy's most loyal shoppers were certain to be disheartened and hurt. Who is trying to kill Christmas?

It needs to be said: what we are witnessing here are hate crimes against Christianity, the manifestations, the symptoms of a sickness of the soul, a disease a Vatican diplomat correctly

calls "Christianophobia," the fear and loathing of all things Christian, coupled with a fanatic will to expunge from the public life of the West all reminders that ours was once a Christian civilization and America once a Christian country.

Americans are among the most tolerant of peoples. No one demands that any dissenting adult or child be made to say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag, or join in Christmas caroling, or be forced to say a prayer before class, or go to church at Christmas. The Christian majority only asks that they be free to be themselves, to exercise their freedom to express their love of their Savior as the First Amendment has always guaranteed.

But what are we to make of Maplewood, New Jersey, where the Columbus High School brass ensemble was ordered not to play a single Christmas carol at their holiday concert, not even an instrumental version? Parents and students were outraged. "This is censorship at its most basic level," said student Ryan Dahn. Correct, Ryan.

In Denver, officials of the annual Parade of Lights refused to permit in the parade a float carrying the banner "Merry Christmas" with members of the Faith Bible Chapel congregation who were to sing Christmas carols. Approved was a float sponsored by Two Souls, an American Indian group that considers homosexuality holy.

While Christmas often brings forth the best in some of us because of who and what is being celebrated, that is not true for all of us. For some it brings forth the purest malevolence. Why? Sadly, because they do not know Him. Nevertheless, Merry Christmas—to all. ■

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[yankee come home]

A Time for Leaving

American security and Iraqi stability depend on a prompt handover.

By William R. Polk

FROM CHILDHOOD, we Americans are deluged with slogans. We often select our breakfast food, our soap, and our toothpaste by jingles and catchphrases rather than by reading the labels. So we fall easily into accepting evocative expressions in place of analysis even when it comes to national security. Our parents were sold on the slogan that the First World War was the “war to end all wars,” although the 20th century had more of them than any other in history. We went into Vietnam fearing the “domino effect,” although the struggle there had little relationship to events in any other Asian country. We were rushed into the war in Iraq by the assertion that little, poor, remote Iraq was at the point of attacking mighty America, and now we are bogged down there allegedly by a ragtag faction of Ba’athist diehards.

Seldom do we hear hard-headed analysis of what is happening, what is possible, what the alternatives are, how much each will cost in lives, treasure, prestige, and security. When I was the member of the U.S. State Department’s Policy Planning Council responsible for the Middle East, I had the duty to try to understand the reality in the problems we then faced, to comprehend the forces at work, and to identify what could be done. Now as a private citizen, I ask: what is the reality of Iraq, what do we face there, and what can we do?

* * *

Leaving aside Kurdistan, where roughly a quarter of all Iraqis live, Iraq is a shattered country. Its infrastructure has been pulverized by the “shock and awe” of the American invasion. Few Iraqis today even have clean drinking water or can dispose of their waste. About 7 in 10 adult Iraqis are without employment. Factories are idle, and small shopkeepers have been squeezed out of business. Movement even within cities is difficult and dangerous. And the trend in each of these categories is downward. Iraq’s society has been torn apart, and perhaps as many as 100,000 Iraqis have died. Virtually every Iraqi has a parent, child, spouse, cousin, friend, colleague, or neighbor—or perhaps all of these—among the dead. More than half of the dead were women and children. Putting Iraq’s casualties in comparative American terms would equate to about one million American deaths. Dreadful hatreds have been generated.

Not all hatreds are on the Iraqi side. American soldiers, often not knowing why they are in Iraq but only that they are getting shot at in 50 to 100 attacks each day, are fearful. Against an indistinguishable enemy, who fades into the general population, their fear turns into general hatred. To GIs, the natives are “ragheads,” just as in Vietnam they

were “gooks.” And they may be suicide bombers. Hatred of the enemy appeared in a film made by NBC News inside a mosque in Fallujah showing a Marine shooting a wounded Iraqi. It also appeared in the photographs of the torture of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison. Those scenes, in turn, helped to cement the image of the uniformed, indistinguishable foreign troops as the common enemy, whom the Iraqis are beginning to call the “crusaders.”

Such graphic demonstrations of hatred and contempt also, of course, echo far beyond Iraq among the more than one billion Muslims throughout the world. They have tended to corrupt the greatest of America’s national treasures, the nearly universal respect of mankind. As one former senior Army officer Andrew Bacevich said, “My sense is that such an impression has already taken hold in the Arab world.” He is certainly right.

Thus, even when, as in the Fallujah battle, the insurgents were outnumbered at least 20:1, and it was obvious that they could not win against a phalanx of helicopters, gunships, fighter-bombers, tanks, and artillery, they fought to become martyrs for their cause and thus to inspire others to take up their mission. They lost the battle of Fallujah as they will lose every battle. But they have not lost the war. This is the reality with which America must deal.

* * *

Guerrilla warfare is not new. In fact, it is probably the oldest form of warfare. But in recent centuries, so much attention was given to formal warfare that most soldiers forgot about informal war. Although few guerrilla leaders have given us accounts of how they organized, got their supplies, fought, retreated, regrouped, and fought again, history provides a rich lode of information. We can study experiences dating from the 20th-century conflicts in Europe, Asia, and Africa, including the Irish struggle against the British, Tito's and the Greek ELAS's struggles against the Germans in the Balkans, Mao Zedong's war against the Japanese and then against the forces of Chang Kai-shek in China, the Viet Minh's defeat of the French in Indo-China, the Algerian war of national liberation against the French, the Chechens' centuries-long war against the Russians and, of course, our Vietnam and Russia's Afghanistan.

The story they tell was well summarized by Mao Zedong when he described the guerrilla as a fish that must swim in the sea of the people. Absent popular support, Mao's sea, the guerrilla is at best an outlaw and, more likely and sooner, a corpse. But with the support of the people, he is elusive, nourished, and ultimately replaceable. Consequently, almost no matter what forces are brought against him, he—or at least his cause—has proven indefatigable. If we are ignorant of this history, we are doomed to repeat it.

Generation after generation of soldiers and strategists have done just that—repeated it. Often ignorant of history and of the reflections of their predecessors, they attempted to find techniques to defeat the guerrillas. The ultimate way was by killing them. Caesar's conquest of Gaul was essentially a war of extermination as was the British war against the Irish and the

Tsarist and Communist Russians' war on the Chechens. Even genocide rarely succeeded because new generations arose to replace the dead.

If not all could be killed, at least their lands and other resources could be taken away from them and given to alien settlers. This was the gist of colonialism as practiced by the French in Algeria and the Russians in Central Asia. Since we regard neither genocide nor colonialism as politically correct today, experiments have been made with various other tactics. In Vietnam, America tried a variety of them, as did the Soviet Union in Afghanistan without ultimate success. Today, in Iraq and in occupied Palestine, Americans and Israelis are repeating these campaigns, focusing primarily on the application of overwhelming military power designed to dishearten the insurgents. In 40 years, the Israelis have not achieved security; the chances that the Americans will in five years appear unlikely.

many more people who do not themselves actually fight support them.

Knowing that they cannot defeat the foreign enemy, they seek not so much to win battles but to wear him down, to inflict upon him what he will regard as unacceptable casualties and other costs, and to erode his political support. Thus, almost inevitably, the techniques of guerrilla warfare fade into terrorism.

We have mistakenly acted as though terrorism was a thing or a group against which one can fight. But terrorism is merely a tactic that can be used by anyone. Ancient Britons used it against the Romans, the Zionists against the British, the Algerians against the French, the French against the Nazis, the Chechens against the Russians, the Basques against the Spaniards, and so on. It is the traditional "weapon of the weak," who resort to it when all else fails.

At the beginning of the struggle against Saddam Hussein, the Bush administration charged that Iraq was a

KNOWING THAT THEY **CANNOT DEFEAT THE FOREIGN ENEMY**, THEY SEEK NOT SO MUCH TO **WIN BATTLES** BUT TO **WEAR HIM DOWN**, TO INFLICT UPON HIM WHAT HE WILL REGARD AS **UNACCEPTABLE CASUALTIES** AND OTHER COSTS.

Why is this so? The answer is essentially simple: people of all religions and races share a common desire to control their own lives. Our Declaration of Independence puts it eloquently for us, and President Woodrow Wilson summed it up neatly for others when he spoke of the quest for "the self-determination of peoples." Thwarted in this quest, some people—whom, if we approve of them, we call "freedom fighters" or, if not, "fanatics" or "terrorists"—take up arms, as Americans did in our revolution. They are usually few in number, perhaps 15,000 or so in Iraq today and roughly the same in Algeria in the 1950s, but

terrorist state acting in close collaboration with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda. In the emotional reaction to the attacks in New York and Washington, sloganeering drowned out intelligence. Saddam Hussein's regime was certainly evil, but Iraq was not a terrorist state. It had no significant relationship with any terrorist organization as the American, British, and Israeli intelligence agencies knew. In fact, Osama bin Laden, a religious fundamentalist, had offered to raise a military force to fight Saddam's secular government and denounced Saddam with the strongest condemnation a Muslim can utter, that he was a *kafir*, a

godless person. Despite the findings of official American investigations, however, the rallying cries stick in our minds. Seven in 10 Americans still believe Saddam Hussein was working with Osama bin Laden in the September 11, 2001 attacks.

While that is wrong, Iraq has changed under American blows so that it is now a prime recruiting ground and justification for terrorism. As the commander of the 1st Marine Division, Maj. Gen. Richard Natonski, put it just before the attack on Fallujah, "After we take Fallujah, the terrorists will have no sanctuary, nowhere to hide." I remember similar words about the Vietcong. And within a day after the general said this, fighting broke out in a dozen Iraqi cities. The Russians could have told General Natonski that a decade after they did to the Chechen city of Grozny what his troops did to Fallujah, fighting continued. That is what we are now seeing in Iraq. This is the reality with which we must begin. So what can America do?

* * *

Today, there are no good options—only better or worse alternatives. Three appear possible:

The first option has been called "staying the course." In practice, that means continued fighting. France "stayed the course" in Algeria in the 1950s as America did in Vietnam in the 1960s and as the Israelis are now doing in occupied Palestine. It has never worked anywhere. In Algeria, the French employed over three times as many troops—nearly half a million—to fight roughly the same number of insurgents as America is now fighting in Iraq. They lost. America had half a million soldiers in Vietnam and gave up. After four decades of warfare against the Palestinians, the Israelis have achieved neither peace nor security.

Wars of national "self-determination" can last for generations or even centuries. Britain tried to beat down (or

even exterminate) the Irish for nearly 900 years, from shortly after the 11th-century Norman invasion until 1921; the French fought the Algerians from 1831 until 1962; Imperial and Communist Russia fought the Chechens since about 1731. Putin's Russia is still at it. There was no light at the end of those tunnels.

IN ALGERIA, THE FRENCH EMPLOYED OVER THREE TIMES AS MANY TROOPS—NEARLY HALF A MILLION—TO FIGHT ROUGHLY THE SAME NUMBER OF INSURGENTS AS AMERICA IS NOW FIGHTING IN IRAQ. THEY LOST.

At best, staying the course in Iraq can be only a temporary measure as eventually America will have to leave. But during the period in which it stays, say the next five years, my guess is that another 30,000 to 40,000 Iraqis will die or be killed while the U.S. armed forces will lose at least another 1,000 dead and 20,000 seriously wounded. The monetary cost will be hundreds of billions of dollars.

It is not only the casualties or treasure that count. What wars of "national liberation" demonstrate is that they also brutalize the participants who survive. Inevitably such wars are vicious. Both sides commit atrocities. In their campaigns to drive away those they regard as their oppressors, terrorists/freedom fighters seek to make their opponents conclude that staying is unacceptably expensive and, since they do not have the means to fight conventional wars, they often pick targets that will produce dramatic and painful results. Irish, Jews, Vietnamese, Tamils, Chechens, Basques, and others blew up hotels, cinemas, bus stations, and apartment houses, killing many innocent bystanders. The more spectacular, the bloodier, the better for their campaigns. So the Irgun blew up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem in 1946, the IRA a Brighton hotel in 1984, an Iraqi group the UN headquarters in

Baghdad in 2003. Chechens blew up an apartment house in Moscow in 2003, while a Palestinian group blew up an Israeli-frequented hotel in Taba, Egypt in 2004.

Faced with such challenges, the occupying power often reacts with massive attacks aimed at terrorists but inevitably

kills many civilians. To get information from those it manages to capture, it also frequently engages in torture. Torture did not begin at the Abu Ghraib prison; it is endemic in guerrilla warfare. Two phrases from the Franco-Algerian war of the 1950s-60s tell it all: "torture is to guerrilla war what the machine gun was to trench warfare in the First World War" and "torture is the cancer of democracy." Guerrilla warfare and counterinsurgency inexorably corrupt the very causes for which soldiers and insurgents fight. Almost worse, even in exhausted "defeat" for the one and heady "victory" for the other, they leave behind a chaos that spawns warlords, gangsters, and thugs as is today so evident in Chechnya and Afghanistan.

The longer the fighting goes on, the worse the chaos. Viewing the devastation of Fallujah, one correspondent wrote, "Even the dogs have started to die, their corpses strewn among twisted metal and shattered concrete in a city that looks like it forgot to breathe ... The city smelled like dust, ash—and death." Viewing the same scene, the deputy commander of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force said, "This is what we do ... This is what we do well." This is not new or unique; it is classic. Recall the statement the Roman historian Tacitus attributed

to the contemporary guerrilla leader of the Britons. The Romans, he said, “create a desolation and call it peace.”

The second option is “Vietnamization.” In Vietnam, America inherited from the French both a government and a large army. What was needed, the Nixon administration proclaimed, was to train

The third option is to choose to get out rather than being forced. Time is a wasting asset; the longer the choice is put off, the harder it will be to make. The steps required to implement this policy need not be dramatic, but the process needs to be unambiguous. The initial steps could be merely verbal: America would

could split into a sort of eastern Balkans with Kurdish, Sunni Arab, and Shia Arab successor states. The one would certainly create mafia-style terrorism, while the other would promote mayhem as thousands of suddenly created refugees flee from now alien states. Further regional instability would be created, and possibly either Turkey or Iran or both would intervene, Turkey to suppress the Kurds and Iran to protect the Shi’ites. The results are unforeseeable but certainly ruinous.

On the other hand, in an attempt to avoid this disaster, we and our Iraqi protégés could, as we are now attempting, create a new Iraqi army. We should heed the lesson of Iraqi history. In the past, the British-created army destroyed moves toward civil society and probably would do so again, paving the way for the ghost of Saddam Hussein. In the period during and following American evacuation, Iraq would need a police force but not an army. A UN multinational peacekeeping force would be easier, cheaper, and safer. The balance between “security” and cohesion would be difficult to achieve and maintain, and we could be of only minimal help, but either extreme would be worse.

Meanwhile, a variety of service functions would have to be organized. Given a chance, Iraq could do them mostly by itself. With its vast potential in oil production, probably the greatest in the world, it could soon again become a rich country with a talented, well-educated population. Step by step, health care, clean water, sewage, roads, bridges, pipelines, electric grids, and housing could be provided by the Iraqis themselves, as they were in the past. When I visited Baghdad in February 2003, on the eve of the invasion, the Iraqis with whom I talked were proud that they had rebuilt what had been destroyed in the 1991 war. They can surely do so again. More important, in carrying out the

THE IDEA THAT AMERICA CAN FASHION A **LOCAL MILITIA** TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT ITS **POWERFUL ARMY** CANNOT DO IS NOT POLICY BUT FANTASY.

the army, equip it, and then turn the war over to it. True, the army did not fight well nor did the government rule well, but they existed. In Iraq, America inherited neither a government nor an army. It is trying to create both. Not surprisingly, the results are disappointing. Most Iraqis regard the American-selected and American-created government as merely an American puppet. And the idea that America can fashion a local militia to accomplish what its powerful army cannot do is not policy but fantasy. An Iraqi army is unlikely to fight insurgents with whom soldiers sympathize and among whom they have relatives. Many have reportedly thrown off their new uniforms and joined the insurgents.

Much has been made also of the constitution we wrote for the Iraqis. It reads well, as did the one the British wrote for the Iraqis 80 years ago in 1924, but it is not anchored in the realities of Iraqi society. Absent the institutions that give life to a constitution, it will be simply a piece of paper as was the one the British provided. Representative government grows in the soil of the people or it does not grow at all. It cannot be mandated by foreign rulers.

Thus, the best America might gain from this option is a fig leaf to hide defeat; the worst, in a rapid collapse, would be humiliating evacuation, as in Vietnam.

have to declare unequivocally that it will give up its lock on the Iraqi economy, will cease to spend Iraqi revenues as it chooses, and will allow Iraqi oil production to be governed by market forces rather than by an American monopoly.

The second step, more difficult, is to make a truce and pull back its forces. If President Bush could be as courageous as Gen. Charles de Gaulle was in Algeria when he called for a “peace of the brave,” fighting would quickly die down. This is not wishful thinking; it is what happened time after time in guerrilla wars.

Then, and only then, could Iraqis themselves set about creating a national consensus. It would probably not come through elections, although they might legitimize the process. We would probably not like the government that emerged, but we are already beyond being able to control that choice. What we should help and encourage is the essentially indigenous process of building civil institutions. Only as they emerge will some form of reasonably peaceful, reasonably free, reasonably decent government have a chance. This is the most sensitive and difficult part of the whole affair. It cannot be rushed, and we cannot do it for the Iraqis.

The danger during this period is twofold: on the one hand, Iraq, like Afghanistan, could shatter with local warlords seizing the pieces, or Iraq

rebuilding and reordering process, particularly at the grassroots level, Iraqis would begin to take control of their lives and start building the neighborhood institutions and consensus on which, if it is to grow at all, representative government will depend.

Economically, Iraq will also have to mend itself. Here the American role is primarily negative. We have imposed policies during our occupation that worked against the recovery of Iraqi industry and commerce. Abrogating these would spur development since any reasonably intelligent and self-interested government would emphasize getting Iraqi enterprises back into operation and employing Iraqi workers. That process could be speeded up through international loans, commercial agreements, and protective measures so that unemployment, now at socially catastrophic levels, would be diminished. Neighborhood participation in running social affairs and providing security are old traditions in Iraqi society and allowing or favoring their reinvigoration would promote the excellent side effect of grassroots political representation.

As fighting dies down, reasonable security is achieved, and popular institutions revive, the one million Iraqis now living abroad will be encouraged to return home. In the aggregate they are intelligent, highly trained, and well motivated and can make major contributions in all phases of Iraqi life. Oil production will play a key role. The income it generates can make possible great public works projects that will help to lure back Iraqi émigrés, employ Iraqi workers, encourage local entrepreneurs, and salvage the class of merchants and shopkeepers who traditionally provided security in Oriental cities. In its own best interest, the Iraqi government would empower the Iraq National Oil Company (INOC) to award concessions by bid to a variety of international companies to sell oil on the

world market. This is obviously to the best interests not only of Iraq but also of the Western world.

Contracts for reconstruction paid for by Iraqi money would be awarded under bidding, as they traditionally were, but to prevent excessive corruption would perhaps initially be supervised by the World Bank. The World Bank would, of course, follow its regular procedures on its loans. Where other countries supplied aid, they would probably insist on (and could be given) preferential treatment in the award of contracts as is common practice everywhere.

In such a program, inevitably, there will be setbacks and shortfalls, but they can be partly filled by international organizations. The steps will not be easy; Iraqis will disagree over timing,

personnel, and rewards, while giving the process a chance will require a rare degree of American political courage. But, and this is the crucial matter, any other course of action would be far worse for both America and Iraq. The safety and health of American society as well as Iraqi society requires that this policy be implemented intelligently, determinedly—and soon. ■

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The Folly of Albion

Lessons from Britain's imperial wreck

By Andrew J. Bacevich

ONE OF THE MORE BIZARRE notions currently finding favor in jingoistic quarters is a conviction that the United States in the 21st century ought to model itself after the British Empire in its 19th- and early 20th-century heyday. According to modish historians such as Niall Ferguson, the record of imperial Britain contains a trove of wisdom that imperial America can put to good use keeping order, fostering prosperity, and spreading the blessings of civilization. All that's needed is for the sole superpower of the present day—according to Ferguson, an “empire in denial”—to step up to the plate and overcome its refusal “to acknowledge the full extent of its responsibilities.” With that in mind,

Ferguson counsels the people of the United States “to get over the American inhibition about learning from non-American history.”

There is something to be said for this advice: when it comes to tapping the lessons of history, Americans do tend to rely on a meager stock of familiar analogies of sometimes questionable relevance. To appreciate our current predicament, we ought to cast our net more broadly. So let us refrain from further references to quagmires and Tet Offensives. Enough already with the uncharitable comparisons of Donald Rumsfeld to Robert McNamara. As we consider the fate awaiting us as the Bush administration wades ever more deeply into the region

that it grandly refers to as the Broader Middle East, let us profit from the experience of Great Britain.

Yet on that score, the lessons that history has to teach are almost entirely negative. British ambitions in the Middle East nearly a century ago, as grandiose in their way as the Bush administration's in our own day, produced disastrous results and cost Britain its empire.

BRITISH AMBITIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST NEARLY A CENTURY AGO PRODUCED DISASTROUS RESULTS AND COST BRITAIN ITS EMPIRE.

"Our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators." So proclaimed Lt. Gen. Sir Frederick Stanley Maude, the British equivalent of Gen. Tommy Franks and the commander of the British forces that entered Baghdad in March 1917. As with the rhetoric employed to justify the invasion of March 2003, Sir Frederick's statement was at best a half-truth. London's actual purpose—like Washington's some 86 years later—was hegemony. Freeing the people of Mesopotamia from Turkish oppression was a means to a larger end. The real aim was to institute a new political order, not only along the Tigris and Euphrates but across the region, thereby securing British control over the Persian Gulf oil that appeared crucial to the preservation of British power.

Granted, Britain could count on a homegrown variant of our own neoconservatives to camouflage the true nature of the enterprise. These ideologues, close to and sometimes within the British government, insisted that the motive force for British actions in the Middle East and elsewhere was to be found in British ideals. Thus, according to Arthur Hirtzel, an official of the India Office, "The Empire ... has been given to us as a means to that great end for which

Christ came into the world, the redemption of the human race. That is to say, it has been given to us to make it Christian. This is to be Britain's contribution to the redemption of mankind." In its way, Hirtzel's book *The Church, The Empire, and The World*, published in 1919, stands as a precursor to Richard Perle and David Frum's *An End to Evil*, published in 2003. The former summons

Britain to redeem mankind by converting nonbelievers; the latter calls on the United States to redeem mankind by spreading democratic values. Both provide handy moral justifications for employing the sword, and both neatly disguise more sordid *raison d'état*.

As in the global War on Terror and in the so-called Great War, the incursion into Iraq was merely Step One in what was intended to be a multi-phased campaign. Employing a combination of its own army and surrogates to peel off portions of the ramshackle Ottoman Empire, Great Britain sought to maneuver itself into a position where it could redraw the map of the entire region. American soldiers who in 1918 rallied to assist hard-pressed British troops on the Western Front may have believed that they were fighting to make the world safe for democracy and to enshrine a new right of "self-determination." But British officials knew better: the war to defeat German militarism was also an opportunity for imperial expansion and for keeping competitors—not least of all the United States—from horning in on the strategically vital Persian Gulf.

The upshot: in the aftermath of World War I, British statesmen engineered a peace settlement that brought the empire to its high-water mark. Out of an

Anglo-French system of mandates and protectorates, of puppet monarchs and compliant sheiks, there emerged the modern Middle East. By 1920, with luckless France obliged to content itself with Lebanon and Syria, Britain controlled directly or indirectly the territory encompassing the present-day countries of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, and Iran.

But British statesmen wanted to do more than simply rearrange boundaries and install local sycophants onto thrones of doubtful provenance. To ensure the permanent incorporation of the Middle East into Britain's sphere of influence, they sought to Anglicize the region. Local elites thoroughly imbued with British values could be counted on to defer willingly to London on matters large and small.

With this in mind, the British government devised what the Bush administration in our own day describes as a "strategy of transformation." Here Britain's imperial ambitions appeared to converge with the interests of Zionists lobbying to create a Jewish homeland. Even before the war and prior to the issuance of the Balfour Declaration, British statesmen fancied that the creation of a Zionist state in Palestine could serve as a beachhead of British values and culture in the region. Winston Churchill, for one, believed, "The establishment of a strong, free Jewish state astride the bridge between Europe and Africa ... would not only be an immense advantage to the British Empire, but a notable step towards the harmonious disposition of the world among its peoples." The idea, according to Leo Amery, a member of Prime Minister Lloyd George's wartime inner circle, was quite simple, "using the Jews as we have used the Scots, to carry the English ideal through the Middle East," Britain could "make Palestine the centre of western influence."

It all seemed so logical and so straightforward. Yet even before the various elements of this bold design were in place, it all began to unravel. The new British order for the Middle East became, to cite the title of David Fromkin's brilliant book on the topic, *A Peace to End All Peace*.

Notably, among the first places in which trouble appeared was Iraq, which Britain in a spurious exercise in nation-building had cobbled together out of disparate tribal groups. Beginning in June 1920, a series of seemingly unrelated anti-British uprisings occurred, which the liberators attempted to suppress by relying on Britain's strong suit—not, as it turned out, Christian ideals, but superior firepower. Appreciating that Britain had too few ground troops to meet all of its far-flung responsibilities, Churchill, then serving as Secretary of State for War and Air, assigned the chief responsibility for pacifying Iraq to the Royal Air Force. Eager to prove its worth as an imperial police force, the fledgling RAF seized upon this mission with considerable eagerness. In the campaign of aerial intimidation that ensued, avoiding noncombatant casualties did not figure as a priority. As one RAF squadron leader noted, "if the tribespeople were doing something they ought not to be doing then you shot them."

Bringing recalcitrant Iraqis to heel was essential if Britain were to consolidate the winnings it had scooped up as a consequence of World War I. But in Iraq, firepower could win battles but not hearts and minds. Indeed, it was in Iraq that the long, mournful process of British imperial decline began.

In fact, the anticipated "transformation" of the new Middle East into a bastion of British influence never took hold. Instead, there ensued a delaying action that played itself out over several decades as London struggled to stanch

the gradual erosion of its position in the region. The effort led Britain to overextend itself economically and to compromise itself morally—not least of all in its cynical response to the sensitive issue of Jewish immigration into Palestine.

Worse, resources frittered away in trying to maintain some semblance of a foothold in the Middle East were unavailable to counter the rising Nazi threat of the 1930s. Rather than contributing to British security, the Middle East served only to complicate it further. Indeed, when war erupted once again in Europe, most Arabs in the lands nominally controlled by Great Britain tilted toward Germany. In mid-1941, the RAF was once again bombing Iraqis—this time to put down a coup mounted by rabidly pro-Nazi (and anti-Semitic) fanatics.

By the time World War II ended, the jig was up. A series of humiliating setbacks ensued. In Palestine, London simply threw up its hands and left. (Not surprisingly, fostering the spread of British values did not appear on the agenda of the Jewish state that emerged shortly thereafter; Israelis did not see themselves as Scots.) Egypt and Iraq gave

What does this record of miscalculation and misadventure have to teach the United States today? Viewed in retrospect, when it comes to pursuing its aims in the Middle East, Albion comes across not so much as perfidious as reckless and foolish. The schemes that Britain devised and the messianic claims offered up to justify those schemes seem silly. The lack of realism—the refusal to consider whether Britain possessed the reserves of power to fulfill its ambitions—appears simply stupefying. Above all, the assumption that the peoples of the Middle East would necessarily buy into British notions of what is right and good was utterly misguided. In short, the expectation that Great Britain in the 1920s might manipulate events so as to suit its own purposes was a pipedream, doomed from the start.

To state the matter plainly, Great Britain botched the Middle East and forfeited its position as a world power as a consequence. Today British politicians like Tony Blair, with his neo-Churchillian posturing, and British imperial apologists like Niall Ferguson, with his neo-Kiplingesque call to shoulder the White

THE **NEW BRITISH ORDER** FOR THE MIDDLE EAST BECAME, TO CITE THE TITLE OF DAVID FROMKIN'S BOOK, **A PEACE TO END ALL PEACE**.

Britain the boot. Elsewhere, especially where oil profits were to be had, the rich Americans elbowed their impoverished ally aside. The low point came in the Suez Crisis of 1956 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower threatened to bring Britain to its knees economically if it did not call off its ill-advised invasion of Egypt. Prime Minister Anthony Eden meekly complied. The British lion was well on its way to becoming what present-day Britons themselves deride as an American poodle.

Man's Burden, are asking the United States to clean up the mess created in no small measure as a direct result of British folly.

So let us learn from our cousins across the pond. If that's what empire has on offer, then thanks but no thanks. ■

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Wiring Shangri-La

Television has introduced a rot in the land where Gross National Happiness counts for more than Gross National Product.

By Peter Hitchens

EVEN CONSERVATIVES can have utopias. For us, however, they are usually imagined countries of the past, with their virtues exaggerated and their vices diminished. We know better than to try to create them now or even set them in the future, which we confidently expect will turn out badly. They are safer by far in the form of fiction, from which they cannot escape. One of the most potent of these ideal states was created by the author James Hilton, whose 1933 novella *Lost Horizon* gave the world the expression “Shangri-La,” a name still to be found, inscribed in tarnished or faded letters, on the gates of hundreds of English suburban homes whose owners hoped to find peace, and even peace of mind, behind fences and hedges and among birdsong and apple trees.

Popular writers are belittled by intellectuals precisely because they are popular. But Hilton was no fool, and his success should not make us despise him. His book begins in Berlin just before Hitler’s accession to power and is prescient about the approaching war. But it is mainly set in a secluded monastery, in a hidden valley that even modern man cannot easily discover and whose chief lama prophesies before he dies of “a time when men, exultant in the technique of homicide, would rage so hotly over the world that every precious thing would be in danger, every book and picture and harmony, every treasure garnered through two millennia, the small, the delicate, the defenseless, all

would be lost like the lost books of Livy, or wrecked as the English wrecked the Summer Palace in Peking.”

The purpose of the place, he reveals, is to “conserve the frail elegancies of a dying age, and seeking such wisdom as men will need when their passions are all spent ... when the strong have devoured each other, the Christian ethic may at last be fulfilled, and the meek shall inherit the earth.” The monastery stands guard over, and is supported by, a small, contented society in the valley below, ruled by a rather jolly, if unlikely, mixture of Buddhism and Christianity.

The orthodox may be a little shocked by the fuzzy theology preached at Shangri-La, though in our secular world its unshakeable faith in the existence and purpose of a benevolent Creator is heartening in itself. What is more shocking is that, if you follow carefully the

the rest of our globalized world, partly because of its naturally fortified position thousands of feet up on the edge of the great Himalayas, partly because of its laudable, courageous king’s determination to preserve what he can of the harmonious, the delicate, and the defenseless. Alone among the world’s leaders he insists that Gross National Happiness is a more important measure of success than Gross National Product. He rejoices in his country’s isolation and takes good advantage of the fact that it is almost impossible to get into. There is one legal land border crossing and one airport, approachable only by pilots of considerable skill. He prohibits the wearing of jeans and other cargo-cult clothing (at least by day) and strives to keep mass tourism away from Bhutan’s lovely valleys and stupendous mountains. Every house,

THE KING REJOICES IN HIS COUNTRY’S ISOLATION AND TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE FACT THAT IT IS **ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO GET INTO**. THERE IS **ONE LEGAL BORDER CROSSING** AND **ONE AIRPORT**, APPROACHABLE ONLY BY PILOTS OF CONSIDERABLE SKILL.

astonishing journey, described in Hilton’s book, that leads to this place, you will find yourself in a real country that has at least some of the characteristics of his imagined paradise.

The Kingdom of Bhutan, squeezed between India and Chinese-occupied Tibet, has managed to remain apart from

office, and hotel must be built in the country’s traditional style, an engaging mixture of half-timbered Shakespearean manor house and Tibetan lamasery. Until five years ago he even banned television, rightly seeing it as a menace to his settled, ancient, and profoundly religious society.

This was not technophobic spite or mindless resistance to scientific progress. Bhutan has fine modern hospitals and excellent schools. Its elite are educated to high standards, and instruction is in English from the first grade upwards. The ancient national sport, archery, is often performed with ultra-modern American steel bows. Laptops and cellphones are to be found, flashing and beeping, among the ancient courtyards of Bhutan's monasteries and fortresses. These are often the same place, as Bhutan has no separation between Buddhism and state, and when I interviewed the Home Affairs Minister, Jigme Thinley, I had to approach his office through sacred courtyards filled with monks in mulberry-colored robes, in the shadow of towering, forbidden temples. After passing through several exquisite anterooms, curtained door after curtained door, and accepting the compulsory cup of butter tea that accompanies all converse in Bhutan, I was at last brought into his presence. He was garbed in national dress, a belted robe, adorned with an orange scarf to denote his high rank, and enhanced with a sword—which he kindly drew from its scabbard to reveal a businesslike short blade. In the midst of our conversation, his very modern cellphone rang. It was a summons from the Royal Palace, which meant that he had to pull on a pair of magnificent ceremonial boots, compulsory court dress. Clad in mere dreary suit and tie, I wished my newspaper provided its reporters with ceremonial uniforms and yearned for the days of cocked hats, epaulettes, and ostrich feathers.

Before he went to see the king, the minister explained to me that this small, wild, remote country—so unmodernized that nobody is sure how many people live there—is determined not to follow the example of so many Asian nations, which have westernized themselves out of all recognition. Uncon-

quered throughout its history, the only Buddhist state on earth, Bhutan has a quiet pride. "Many developing countries began with a sense of shame about what they were, and wanting to be like the West. Those who helped them promoted that kind of shame," he told me. "We

howling, hissing, and roaring down from the satellites that can reach even into the most guarded and secluded valley, into the high, thin, pure air of Bhutan, which until recently was filled with nothing but millions of prayers. Grown adults are not all that much affected,

THIS SMALL, WILD, REMOTE COUNTRY IS DETERMINED NOT TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF SO MANY ASIAN NATIONS, WHICH HAVE WESTERNIZED THEMSELVES OUT OF ALL RECOGNITION.

embarked on the process of development with a sense of pride in our culture, traditions, and customs."

For many years, the kingdom sought to keep out television, which it saw as a great danger to its people. But five years ago the king abandoned the struggle. TV signals were already leaking across the southern border with India. Satellite technology and the invention of small, inconspicuous dishes meant that it was almost impossible to enforce the ban.

Anyway, the minister said, they thought that they were strong enough to withstand it. "We thought we were bringing TV into a society which was fully conscious of what it was and what it valued." Persuasively, he argued that the coming of the cathode-ray tube had actually armored his people against the temptations of crass westernization. "Bhutanese people have discovered from the TV that they are not really badly off. They watch the news channels and what they find in the rest of the world is violence, crime, instability, war, poverty, famine, natural calamities, disasters of proportions we cannot even think of."

There is some truth in this. And if the news was all that they watched, perhaps that is the only effect that it would have. But of course it is not. Everything—from wrestling to ultra-violence, bad language, and pornography—now comes

though in the capital, Thimphu, everyone now gets up an hour later than they used to because they have all taken to watching TV late into the night.

It is the children, with their unformed imaginations and soft, vulnerable minds, who have been most immediately affected. I spoke to teachers who had seriously mixed feelings. Some were pleased by what seemed to be the greater self-confidence that TV brings to the young, having as yet failed to spot that this self-confidence is a byproduct of the conformity it also brings. TV allows children to know instantly what attitudes, words, jokes, and trends are fashionable, and allows them to fit confidently into the mass culture it creates.

Others were worried by the imitative violence in the playground, the way in which local sports now seem feeble and tawdry set against the glamour and power of international sporting heroes. And still others had noticed that their tiny charges had begun to use the filthiest words in the American lexicon of sewer language, all quite unaware of what they were saying.

Kaka Tshering, principal of Thimphu's excellent Yanchenphung Higher Secondary School, observed, "Children are so engrossed by the influence exerted on them. They will lose their own originality."

He warned that aspirations, encouraged by TV, to emulate world-famous rock stars and sporting champions often end in failure and disappointment.

Gloomier still was the academic Dorji Penjore of the Center for Bhutan Studies, who lamented, "Television may have opened our outer eyes to the world beyond Bhutan, but it has closed our inner eyes. We know a lot about the United States and Iraq. But we don't see the real transformation in our family values. Parents should be educating young people in their values, culture, and religion. But they are all caught up watching TV. They no longer teach by example and we are slowly losing our strong oral culture. Religious men and women no longer focus on their daily spiritual exercises. The farmer's daily routine is disrupted by the need to keep up with the soap opera."

On my last day in Bhutan I sat on a terrace above the small town of Paro, watching a lovely, chilly blue dusk settle over the clean, harvested rice fields, the perfect, fitting houses, which look as if they have grown out of the landscape rather than been built, the shrines glowing with hundreds of butter lamps, the huge mysterious temple fortress beyond, and the guardian mountains catching the very last of the light. There I met a North American educator who has been helping to strengthen the country's school system. He told me of a ghastly event at one school, where he had watched little Bhutanese girls, wearing make-up and western dress, bumping and grinding to the sound of rock music. He suspected this could not have happened before the advent of TV, and it filled him with sadness. Perhaps there is, in the end, no defense against the hot rage of the modern world that endangers every good thing. ■

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Not My Movement

How Bush-worshipping Republicans have hijacked conservatism

By Paul Craig Roberts

I REMEMBER WHEN friends would excitedly telephone to report that Rush Limbaugh or G. Gordon Liddy had just read one of my columns over the air. That was before I became a critic of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration, and the neoconservative ideologues who have seized control of the U.S. government.

America has blundered into a needless and dangerous war, and fully half of the country's population is enthusiastic. Many patriots think that, finally, America is standing up for itself and demonstrating its righteous might. Conservatives are taking out their Vietnam frustrations on Iraqis. Karl Rove is wrapping Bush in the protective cloak of war leader. The military-industrial complex is drooling over the profits of war. And neoconservatives are laying the groundwork for Israeli territorial expansion.

The evening before Thanksgiving, Rush Limbaugh was on C-Span TV explaining that these glorious developments would have been impossible if talk radio and the conservative movement had not combined to break the power of the liberal media. In *National Review*, editor Richard Lowry and former editor John O'Sullivan celebrated Bush's re-election triumph over "a hostile press corps." "Try as they might," crowed O'Sullivan, "they couldn't put Kerry over the top." There was a time when I could rant about the "liberal media" with the best of them.

But in recent years I have puzzled over its precise location.

Not so long ago I would have identified the liberal media as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, CNN and the three TV networks, and National Public Radio. But both the *Times* and the *Post* fell for the Bush administration's lies about WMD and supported the invasion of Iraq. CNN, the networks, and NPR have not made an issue of the Bush administration's changing explanations for the invasion.

Do the *Village Voice* and *The Nation* comprise the "liberal media"? The *Village Voice* is known for Nat Hentoff and his columns on civil liberties. Every good conservative believes that civil liberties are liberal because they interfere with the police and let criminals go free. *The Nation* favors spending on the poor and disfavors gun rights, but I don't see the "liberal hate" in *The Nation's* feeble pages that Limbaugh was denouncing on C-Span.

In the ranks of the new conservatives, however, I see and experience much hate. It comes to me in violently worded, ignorant, and irrational e-mails from self-professed conservatives who literally worship George W. Bush. Even Christians have fallen into idolatry.

The Iraq War is serving as a great catharsis for multiple conservative frustrations: job loss, drugs, crime, homosexuals, pornography, promiscuity, abortion, restrictions on prayer in public places, Darwinism, and attacks on reli-

gion. Liberals are the cause. Liberals are against America. Anyone against the war is against America and is a liberal. "You are with us or against us."

This is the mindset of delusion, and delusion permits no facts or analysis. Blind emotion rules. Americans are right, and everyone else is wrong. End of the debate.

That, gentle reader, is the full extent of talk radio, Fox News, the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, *National Review*, the *Weekly Standard*, and, indeed, of the entire concentrated corporate media where noncontroversy in the interest of advertising revenue rules.

LIKE BROWNSHIRTS, THE NEW CONSERVATIVES TAKE PERSONALLY ANY CRITICISM OF THEIR LEADER AND HIS POLICIES.

Once upon a time there was a liberal media. It developed out of the Great Depression and the New Deal. Liberals believed that the private sector is the source of greed that must be restrained by government acting in the public interest. The liberals' mistake was to identify morality with government. Liberals had great suspicion of private power and insufficient suspicion of the power and inclination of government to do good.

Liberals became Benthamites. They believed that as the people controlled government through democracy, there was no reason to fear government power, which should be increased in order to accomplish more good.

The conservative movement that I grew up in did not share the liberals' abiding faith in government. "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Today it is liberals, not conservatives, who endeavor to defend civil liberties from the state. Conservatives have been won around to the old liberal view that

as long as government power is in their hands, there is no reason to fear or limit it. Thus, the Patriot Act that permits government to suspend a person's civil liberty by calling him a terrorist with or without proof. Thus, pre-emptive war that permits the president to invade other countries based on unverified assertions.

There is nothing conservative about these positions. To label them "conservative" is to make the same error as labeling 1930s German Brownshirts "conservative." American liberals called the Brownshirts conservative because the Brownshirts were obviously not liberal.

They were ignorant, violent, delusional, and they worshipped a man of no known distinction. Brownshirts' delusions were protected by an emotional force field. Adulation of power and force prevented Brownshirts from recognizing implications for their country of their reckless doctrines.

Like Brownshirts, the new conservatives take personally any criticism of their leader and his policies. To be a critic is to be an enemy. I went overnight from being an object of conservative adulation to one of derision when I wrote that the U.S. invasion of Iraq was a "strategic blunder."

It is amazing that only a short time ago the Bush administration and its supporters believed that all the U.S. had to do was to appear in Iraq and we would be greeted with flowers. Has there ever been a greater example of delusion?

Delusion is still the defining characteristic of the Bush administration. We have smashed Fallujah, a city of 300,000, only to discover that 10,000 Marines are bogged down in the ruins of the city. If

the Marines leave, the "defeated" insurgents will return. Meanwhile the insurgents have moved on to destabilize Mosul, a city five times as large. Thus, the call for more U.S. troops.

There are no more troops. Our former allies are not going to send troops. The only way the Bush administration can continue with its Iraq policy is to reinstate the draft. When the draft is reinstated, conservatives will loudly proclaim their pride that their sons, fathers, husbands, and brothers are going to die for "our freedom." Not a single one of them will be able to explain why destroying Iraqi cities and occupying the ruins are necessary for "our freedom." But this inability will not lessen the enthusiasm for the project. To protect their delusions, they will demand that the critics be arrested for treason and silenced. Many encouraged by talk radio already speak this way.

Because of the triumph of delusional "new conservatives" and the demise of the liberal media, this war is different from the Vietnam War. As more Americans are killed and maimed in the pointless carnage, more Americans have a powerful emotional stake that the war not be lost and not be in vain. Trapped in violence and unable to admit mistake, a reckless administration will escalate. ■

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All the Rage

The politics of anger, Left and Right ... but mostly Left

By Peter Wood

THE ANGRY LEFT doesn't like the Stupid Right. The Stupid Right doesn't much care for the Angry Left. I never thought the marriage would work out.

To some observers, the political anger of the Left and Right are emotionally similar. After all, both have had some intemperate episodes in recent years. Clinton-hating, with its gleeful descents into theories about Vince Foster, Ron Brown, and the Mena Airport does resemble Bush-hating, with its merry speculations about Afghan oil pipelines and pre-9/11 tip-offs.

The theory that the Left and Right are angry in the same way, though not about the same issues, has been most vigorously developed by Boston College sociologist Alan Wolfe. His view is that political elites on both sides benefit from creating an atmosphere of polarization, and the press amplifies their angry noises. Despite these nonstop efforts to incite anger, the American people have reached rough consensus on most supposedly contentious issues.

Wolfe's view of political anger as the histrionics of an elite denies that there is any meaningful difference between the tantrums of the Left and the connipations of the Right. The no-polarization thesis and its no-difference-between-Left-and-Right-anger corollary have attracted support from scholars and media attention.

In June, in the *New York Times*, John Tierney extolled a book by Stanford University's Morris P. Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, which dwells on the majorities of Americans

who support stricter gun control, the death penalty, and legal abortion and oppose racial preferences in hiring. In August, Joe Klein headed for the dead middle in *Time* magazine in an article headlined, "The People Aren't Split: Beyond Michael Moore vs. Rush Limbaugh." Klein likewise cited Fiorina's study as evidence that most of us are staying out of the crossfire. Klein said he hates "the Anger-Industrial Complex."

I've spent much of the last year immersed in that complex, as I was writing a book entitled *A Bee in the Mouth* on contemporary American anger—or New Anger, as I call it. And I think Wolfe, Fiorina, Tierney, Klein, and others who minimize the degree of polarization mistake what is actually happening.

The cultural disagreements that the political elites give voice to are vividly present in the lives of ordinary Americans. But it is a kind of polarization that isn't easily registered. Even the now famous exit-poll question that showed that 22 percent of voters in the presidential race believed that "moral values" were the most important issue only caught a fleeting glimpse of this reality.

The angri-culture conducts its battles in popular music (hip hop at one extreme, country at the other), television (Comedy Central vs. Fox News), sports (Title IX vs. stock-car racing), and even in clothing styles, tattoos, and cosmetics. Differences that might at first glance look like mere matters of taste reveal underlying assumptions about self-control, personal responsibility, and anger. When is it appropriate to get

angry? And how should that anger be expressed? On the Left side of the cultural divide, anger is a sort of god. To get angry is to be self-empowered and achieve authenticity. Anger of this sort is essentially repudiation, and it takes aim at "authority" that it attacks as unjust, illegitimate, and oppressive. Before the election, the political Left had tapped into these feelings and directed them at Bush, but the feelings were already there among millions who daily mistake a surly attitude as a step toward personal freedom.

On the Right side of the cultural divide, anger is regarded as a dangerously delicious poison. To get angry is to feel momentarily powerful but often at the expense of good judgment. The anger of cultural conservatives is a combination of indignation over violations of traditional moral standards and resentment at the condescension of the cultural elite towards traditionalists of any sort. The political Right can tap into pent-up anger by touching either of these themes or both at once, as when it invokes Bill and Hillary Clinton.

The anger on the Left and the anger on the Right are equally real, but they are not the same thing, either in emotional color or in their intensity. After the election, the Left's anger turned sullen as it switched from vilifying Bush to castigating those who voted for him. When the illusion of self-empowerment promised by New Anger fails to deliver real power, where do the sullen turn for solace? The angry Left has four options:

- Take refuge in a feeling of intellectual and moral superiority
- Blame the lackluster candidate; the principle was right
- Blame the sneaky Republicans; the principle was right
- Realize that anger is not really empowering after all

In the weeks following the election, the first choice was the Left's most audible answer: by sneering at red-state voters, leftist pundits could sustain an afterglow of rage. *New York Times* columnist Frank Rich, who before the election shimmered in his eagerness to vilify Bush, followed the election with a column scrubbed of anger and dressed instead in a peculiar satisfaction. Though Bush won, both parties will henceforth have to "cater to [the] overwhelming majority's blue tastes" for "salacious entertainment." Rich, for example, imagines that admirers of Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" are also buying Jenna Jameson's *How to Make Love Like a Porn Star*. Leering about how denizens of conservative states hypocritically wallow in "excess and vulgarity" might seem an odd way to recover from a political disappointment. But it does justify the expense of anger in others' shame.

The second and third options are straightforward ways to keep anger on boil. The Howard Dean constituency believes the angry message was right; it was just entrusted to a diffident, overly nuanced messenger in John Kerry. Internet conspiracy theorists who think that Diebold engineered Bush's victory by rigging voting machines provide another way to stoke the old resentments.

But what about the last option? Doubts among Democrats about anger as a political strategy are perhaps most audible in conversations about the need to reach out to "moral values" voters. This sort of rhetoric doesn't directly

repudiate anger, but it does seem to redirect attention to less belligerent concerns.

Taken together, neither the Democratic Party nor its leftward flank seem on the road to repudiating the politics of anger. That's because, even if anger doesn't win elections, it has become a part of the personal identities of many erstwhile liberals and antinomian leftists.

This emotional stance was in play long before the '04 presidential race and will remain a factor for years to come. It will endure because it is rooted in motivation and character rather than the excitements of a political season. To understand the anger on the leftward side of the cultural divide, one has to go back over the course of two generations.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Americans discovered the enchantment of angrily repudiating traditional norms of emotional self-restraint. This wasn't the result of a single cultural impulse but came about as the mingled force of several movements. After World War II, for example, Freudian psychology enjoyed its Golden Age, which spread the conceit that repressing anger is more dangerous than venting it.

At the same time, postwar intellectuals domesticated continental existentialism, which extolled as the highest value acting on one's authentic self against the compromises and hypocrisies of "mere" convention. Holden Caulfield, the prep-school hero of J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, spent his fury against the "phonies" he encountered. At least he didn't follow Albert Camus's hero in *The Stranger*, who achieves his existential authenticity by shooting one of those meaningless other people.

The American *avant-garde*, in the form of Allen Ginsberg and the Beat Generation, were meanwhile pioneering an emotional stance that combined anger at bourgeois American life with a taste for histrionics and spectacle. The opening line of Ginsberg's *Howl* captures

self-pity and showmanship along with anger in a tone that is virtually identical to today's leftist op-ed columns: "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked."

As if Freudianism, existentialism, and a howling *avant-garde* were not enough, the decade brought the beginning of a feminist movement enamored with the idea that only by getting really angry with her oppressors can a woman liberate herself.

After 1960, the tributaries to this attack on emotional self-restraint proliferate, but one stands out: the dramatic shift from the civil-rights movement to the Black Power movement. The civil-rights movement presented grievance in the old-fashioned form of holding anger in check. The Black Power movement extolled emotional release.

The generation that launched these movements grew up in families where the older ethic of emotional self-control still prevailed—or at least lingered. But when the participants in these movements had children of their own, they brought their new emotional orientation to the task. In the 1970s and 1980s, a substantial number of children grew up in families (or were raised by single parents) that favored an emotionally open and expressive style and regarded emotional self-restraint with suspicion.

When Americans think about their history, they tend to think of events—wars, disasters, and national achievements—rather than shifts in the way people experience emotions. Emotions seem so—subjective? Personal? Hard to pin down? They are all those things, but they are also shaped by popular ideals and influenced by the prevailing temper of the times. And they are especially under the sway of cultural edicts. If people believe that it is wrong to give vent to anger or shameful to show fear, they will go to considerable effort to calm the one and

stifle the other. Broadly speaking, in the last half century, a large number of Americans have abandoned those ethics in favor of an emotional style that puts a premium on immediacy and authenticity.

Since New Anger has its roots in the anti-traditionalist movements of the 1950s and the counterculture of the 1960s, it is no surprise that the Newly Angry are most numerous on the Left. But the maelstrom of cultural changes never stays within the neat bounds of ideology. Human nature being what it is, traditionalists often get yanked into the vortex along with the original advocates. A popular culture that reinforces the virtue of emotional expressivity is hard to counter with an appeal to self-constraint, quiet respect, and dignity. Thus the Right is also heir to this legacy of "I'm angry therefore I'm real," but unlike the Left, it resists.

The cultural division in America goes far beyond the political elites of Left and Right and their media surrogates hurling lightning bolts at each other. Rather, that division is embodied in the emotional realities of American life, where most people find themselves ranged either on the side that anger is empowering or on the side that anger is tempting but fraught with danger. The former is simpler to state and perhaps easier to sell, since it really invites us to swim along with an already powerful instinct. But the traditionalist response, which summons the older ideal of self-control, is deeply appealing because it offers a life more worth living.

The Angry Left has become increasingly sensitive to the accusation that it is overly angry, and has responded in several ways. One is to declare that wrath against President Bush knows no legitimate limit. From Jonathan Chait's declaration in the *New Republic* that "I hate President George W. Bush" to the recent publication of Nicholson Baker's novel *Checkpoint*, which revels in assassina-

tion fantasies, exponents of the Left's unbridled wrath have been dominant.

The Democratic National Convention, on the other hand, presented the Angry Left's botoxed smile. That approach—pretending the anger didn't really exist—dovetailed nicely with Wolfe's thesis that political polarization is just a game played by the cultural elite. Lewis Lapham in the September issue of *Harper's* offered a revisionist history of the rise of conservatism in America, under the title "Tentacles of Rage." In Lapham's view, the "rage" that deserves analysis is not the Left's fury against Bush. (That, he implies, is good common sense.) Rather it is the Right's overwrought attack on liberalism that, in the course of several decades, has reduced befuddled Americans to patsies for greedy corporations and the rich.

The Lapham essay reminded me of something I'd read in my wanderings in the lava fields of anger. In 1999, Bonnie Berry, who styles herself a "critical criminologist" and is director of the "Social Problems Research Group" in Gig Harbor, Washington, published a book titled *Social Rage: Emotion and Cultural Conflict*. Berry allows that "both left and right movements can be considered rageful," but she has next to nothing to say about leftist rage. Her book examines skinheads, militias, survivalists, groups comprised of victims of crime, purveyors of anti-homosexual prejudice—and Republicans. Among the more mordantly amusing sections is "Rage, The Conservative Right, and Nazism." This is not to imply that Berry is an insensitive person. She delicately notes, for example, "As we know, many people (in particular, many white people), believe that O.J. Simpson killed Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman." And her book has a little note at the beginning eschewing "America" as a synonym for the United States. So, yes, it is possible to conjure a worldview in

which all the rage in America bubbles up from the Right. Berry explains, "The demise of the American dream has angered the privileged who used to be even more privileged," and "These disenfranchised people usually place [the blame] inaccurately, not on the ultrapowerful ... but on historical scapegoats."

Whether we follow those who blame conservative intellectuals for inventing the Culture War or those like Berry who "Blame angry white men for scapegoating minorities," these analyses seem strangely remote from the actual lives of most Americans. Anger is now, as it has always been, a familiar force, felt by everyone in some form. What is different now is that, on one side of the cultural divide, people are giving themselves much greater license to express anger. Indeed some are triumphantly angry and are on a kind of angry debauch. This doesn't promise anything good.

One morning in November, the Angry Left rolled over in bed and realized it was still married to the Stupid Right. What now?

Being an anthropologist, I look for the ways in which dramatic developments in one domain of culture play out in other domains. The presidential election was just one episode in a much broader struggle over the character of American life. Thus out-of-control fans mixing it up with thuggish players at an NBA game seems as much a barometer of our national temper as a Paul Krugman column.

If in fact we are in a period of conservative political ascendancy, we would do well to put restoration of traditional ideals of emotional self-control on the agenda. Teaching Americans how to govern their anger may well make the Angry Left even angrier—and all the easier to defeat. ■

Peter Wood is an associate professor of anthropology at Boston University and the author of Diversity: The Invention of a Concept.

Trading Security Away

Offshoring puts our information sector at risk, though the greater danger may come from lost expertise rather than a cyber-attack.

By W. James Antle III

THE USUAL homeland-security nightmare scenarios focus on hijacked airliners or suitcase nukes being shuttled into the country by terrorists. But in today's information-based economy, should we be just as concerned about the cubicles where our software code is written? As dependent on intricate computing and telecommunications systems as the United States has become over the last decade, the security of our information technology (IT) capabilities is impossible to ignore.

Ask people about the relationship between technology and national security, and the question immediately conjures Hollywood-style images of al-Qaeda cell members huddled in Internet cafes unleashing electronic Armageddon on major American cities. In an era of terrorism and rising anti-American sentiment throughout the world, such doomsday scenes cannot be dismissed entirely. But perhaps they overshadow the likelier threat to our safety from rising dependence on others for our country's technology needs.

The issue has gained new salience as companies increasingly move key IT functions and infrastructure to foreign countries, where they can operate at a lower cost than in the domestic market. Offshoring is usually discussed in the context of dollars and cents: the money companies save on the bottom line by farming out such tasks as software development to low-cost labor markets or the impact on the jobs and wages of American technical professionals. But

some now question whether the practice exposes software source codes and IT infrastructure to heightened risk.

Concerns about computers being used as weapons are not new. In February 1998, as the U.S. was preparing for possible military operations in Iraq, the Solar Sunrise attacks were carried out against Defense Department computers worldwide. Hundreds of network passwords were obtained, and many key systems on unclassified networks were affected, although nothing mission-critical was compromised.

The attackers did not turn out to be terrorists or Iraqi saboteurs. Instead, they were two teenagers from California and one from Israel. Instead of being reassured, government officials wondered what more sophisticated attackers could have done. The incident helped the term "cyberterrorism" gain currency, with experts warning about the possibility of hackers logging on

Businesses and government responded with heightened IT scrutiny. According to the Gartner Group, by 2001 companies were spending at least \$3.6 billion annually on security software alone. But many industry insiders argued that major cyberattacks on the level often referred to as "Electronic Pearl Harbor" were unlikely because of the amount of time and resources they would entail. A 2002 study by the U.S. Naval War College concluded that an attack of that magnitude would require five years of planning and \$200 million in funding. Viruses, often written by people no more technically advanced than the Solar Sunrise attackers, have become a frequent and costly nuisance but hardly anything likely to bring the economy to its knees.

Much of the preparation for Y2K—when businesses feared that their systems would confuse 2000 for 1900 and checked software line by line in an

CONGRESSMAN LAMAR SMITH (R-TEXAS) FAMOUSLY PROCLAIMED, "**A MOUSE CAN BE JUST AS DANGEROUS AS A BULLET OR BOMB.**"

and shutting down power grids, opening city water valves, or disabling telephone networks, which became the subjects of articles, academic papers, and hearings. Congressman Lamar Smith (R-Texas) famously proclaimed, "A mouse can be just as dangerous as a bullet or bomb."

effort to avert service interruptions—was done by foreign programmers. When incidents of resultant sabotage and theft proved to be as rare as major Y2K-related outages, many companies came to the conclusion that apprehension about moving programming work offshore was unwarranted.

Today much more of American businesses' IT operations are offshore, in countries ranging from India to China, with the world political climate much different—and more dangerous for Americans—than on New Year's Eve 1999. Industry watchers claim that the opportunity and incentives for mischief have increased, and no Electronic Pearl Harbor-like resources are necessary to take advantage of them. Programmers will have ample opportunity to write "Trojan horses" into software or simply steal information, whether acting on behalf of terrorist networks, organized crime, or foreign intelligence agencies—or simply for their own personal reasons.

So far no major breach has been discovered, though examples of smaller ones are legion. David Lazarus of the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that a Pakistani clerical worker warned UCSF Medical Center in California that she would post patients' confidential records on the Internet unless she was paid money she claimed to be owed. The woman ended up receiving about \$500 from someone Lazarus described as "another person indirectly caught up in the extortion attempt" and withdrew her threat to post the medical files online.

It's the kind of problem that suggests more to come. David McCurdy, a former congressman who now serves as the executive director of the Internet Security Alliance, told the *New York Times* that the risks inherent in offshoring are "the most serious of the industry-based issues that this country faces."

But the UCSF incident could just as easily have been perpetrated by an American with similar motives. A recent Heritage Foundation study suggests that the threat is exaggerated. Senior homeland security research fellow James Jay Carafano and senior legal research fellow Paul Rosenzweig found that IT work can safely be moved to countries that respect "the rule of law, transparency, and open competition."

PROGRAMMERS HAVE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO WRITE "TROJAN HORSES" INTO SOFTWARE OR SIMPLY **STEAL INFORMATION**, WHETHER ACTING ON BEHALF OF **TERRORIST NETWORKS**, ORGANIZED CRIME, OR **FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES**.

"Are there risks involved in outsourcing? Absolutely," Carafano acknowledges. "But those risks are the same whether you outsource to India or Illinois." He argues that the onus should be on companies to ensure that they contract with firms that have effective security controls. "It comes down to two words," says Carafano. "Due diligence."

The Heritage study points to efforts by the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), India's leading IT industry group, to bring Indian regulations into line with U.S. industry standards. "We're not talking about lowering the bar at all," Carafano says. "We're not advocating complacency. But countries are learning that if they want to participate in the global economy, they have to meet certain standards."

According to the Forrester Research Group, some 70 percent of the IT jobs headed abroad by 2015 are en route to India. But some 20 percent are headed to the Philippines, a country wracked by terrorism, and another 10 percent to China, a country many view as a potential competitor to the United States. Doesn't this make a difference?

Carafano says that the overall legal and political climates are more important in an offshoring destination are more important than the prevailing ideology. "Then you have to evaluate it at the individual provider level," he says.

Standards vary not only among countries and offshoring service providers. Companies that outsource also differ in their approaches to protecting offshored tech assets. The Meta Group, a

leading IT consulting firm, found in a study of the European industry that only 58 percent of companies that outsource security services work with their outsourcers to ensure that effective controls are in place. Only 57 percent review the security procedures the firms they outsource to put in place. And as many as 44 percent fail to keep primary responsibility for establishing security procedures within their own company.

"Wherever you outsource you need to have a good service level agreement," says Paul Proctor, Meta's vice president for security and risk strategies. "You need to ask, 'What are the threats to those assets while they are offshore?'"

Carafano believes that the government could play a constructive role in disseminating information. "Markets work when there is transparency," he says. "What would the shareholders of those companies say if they knew that they weren't following all of the industry's standards?"

Ron Hira, assistant professor of public policy at the Rochester Institute of Technology, argues that the national-security risks of offshoring are real but more complicated than the isolated acts

Merry Christmas

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of rogue software engineers. "I think that businesses will ultimately figure out how best to secure their own infrastructures," he says. "That's not the only homeland security problem, even if it is the most obvious one."

According to Hira, the pressing problem is the loss of America's ability to maintain its technological edge over the rest of the world. "Technological superiority is the key to our military superiority," he says. "It's not an accident that so much of our technological innovation has been driven by defense procurement."

As IT work moves offshore, two things happen. One is that the field becomes less attractive to domestic workers, so Americans have less incentive to pursue high-level technical knowledge. While the overall economic impact of offshoring is still being debated, there is growing evidence that it is deterring people from the field. Enrollments for advanced degree programs in engineering and computer science have declined significantly.

The second problem is that when technology is concentrated in inexpensive overseas labor markets, the U.S. military has less ability to influence innovation and encourage the development of needed products through procurement. And the U.S. government necessarily comprises a smaller share of the world market than the domestic market, further diluting its potential impact. Market incentives may exist for companies to protect their data, but not the military's technology edge. "We're not just offshoring infrastructure, we're offshoring creativity and innovation," says Hira. "When the military has technology development needs, they're not looking for the cheapest. They are looking for the best. Will they still be listened to as much if they are a small customer?"

A Congressional Research Service report release in June echoes these concerns: "An increase in offshore outsourc-

ing of high-tech jobs, including computer programming and chip manufacturing, may enable a transfer of knowledge and technology that may eventually threaten U.S. global technical superiority and undermine current advantages."

Hira points out that national-security needs have long driven major U.S. technical advances. The Soviets' launch of Sputnik in 1957 spurred science-education initiatives across the country. NASA bought the integrated circuit from Texas Instruments in 1959. IBM's early computing research was heavily funded by government procurement. Microsoft was originally based not in Seattle but Albuquerque, near the Department of Energy. "Nearly every breakthrough in automation and electronics has had some link to government," says Hira.

Just as the economic debate over the movement of the technology sector overseas has mirrored earlier exchanges over the export of manufacturing jobs, so does the debate over its national-security dimensions. Even if the United States can survive economically without a manufacturing base, is its national-defense posture compromised by a reliance on foreign producers? Given the centrality of technological advantage to America's status as a military superpower, the question may be even more important when discussing the manufacture of computer chips than steel.

The answer may be found in an honest look at the long-term ramifications of offshoring—and an acknowledgement that it may yield costs as well as benefits. ■

Mausoleum of Modern Art

The new MoMA has the soul of a corporate HQ

By Robert Locke

NEW YORK'S FAMED Museum of Modern Art has just reopened after a three-year hiatus in which it nearly doubled in size. The architect of the new structure is the Japanese Yoshio Taniguchi, chosen over a field of prominent Western modernists and postmodernists. For while Japan has never been a hotbed of modern art, and the collection contains few Japanese works, it was a font of architectural minimalism centuries before Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier.

It seems that history has been no kinder to the ponderous philosophical

claims of artistic modernism than to any other of the 20th century's great ideologies, and all we are left with is minimalism. And not even Western minimalism—as in the theoretically bristling, pseudo-mathematical constructions of Peter Eisenman or the cocaine-slick, *nouveau riche* flashiness of Richard Meier—but a contemporary version of a tradition that was mature when colonial Williamsburg was new.

Minimalism is a perfectly valid artistic style with a history that goes back fur-

ther than representational art. It should not be confused with the lead-footed Teutonic abstractionism of most of its “modern” variants. If one responds to it at all, the new building is competently executed and pleasing in a cool, cerebral sort of way that creates a small Zen oasis in the middle of Manhattan’s frenzy. Its garden is even better than the old.

It does resemble a hundred expensive corporate headquarters around the world, many of them festooned with plaza-plop by the same artists displayed within, but then MoMA was born among the social elite, said goodbye to the garrets a long time ago, and has never been squeamish about the synthesis of modern art and modern capitalism. On opening day, the logo of the sponsor was so prominent that I instinctively began to think of the place as “JPMorgan-ChaseMoMA,” which I suppose, on some level, it is.

It is so utterly, pristinely virginal of the slightest whiff of aesthetic innovation that it confesses what savants have known for going on 35 years: modern art is as dead as the wooly mammoths in

Atlanta and San Diego, hasn’t exactly cottoned to this. So the aesthetic-industrial complex rolls on, the venerated idea of the *avant-garde* helping to gentrify neighborhoods and enable yuppies to distinguish themselves from rednecks coast to coast. But the game is over, and it is a joke for such people to congratulate themselves on being “advanced” enough to like modern art. It isn’t 1919 anymore, and modernism is no longer a shocking innovation in a world of cultural norms intact enough for their violation to constitute a vandal, but still authentic, thrill.

They will have to face the truth sooner or later: grandpa’s Weimar-era clichés are not going to be able to pretend they are the latest thing forever. Worse, the great pretender to the modernist throne, postmodernism, has utterly failed to take up modernism’s banner as the essential cultural expression of advanced humanity. Despite launching wildly histrionic gesture after gesture in the sphere of architecture, in art it has only managed endlessly to recycle technically hypertrophied later

seek holy relics of a revolution that has long since ossified into the new establishment and a cutting edge that was blunt before most of them were born. But the sheer idea of being *avant-garde* is so entrancing that they cling to it long after the utter hegemony of modernity in our culture has made it impossible to be *avant* of anything with such quaint equipment as easel and brush.

Don’t misunderstand: the people who run MoMA are not stupid. They realized they couldn’t take their standard-defining 20th-century collection down the rabbit hole of postmodernism without sacrificing it. Thus they decided long ago not to try to keep the museum endlessly new and didn’t assemble a great collection of postmodern art. They bought, as a corporation might buy out an innovative competitor, the postmodern PS1 Art Center but kept it firmly in its industrial wasteland on the wrong side of the river from Manhattan.

Postmodern architects were considered for the expansion: Rem Koolhaas, Koolhaas imitator Bernard Tschumi, Steven Holl. But at the end of the day, it was just too clear that making the Museum of Modern Art tacitly into the Museum of Postmodern Art would be a leap into incoherence. Worse, that leap might not land on anything solid at all, but on the unreliable reputation of a postmodernism that may in the end be judged by history as no more than the decadent phase of modernism. Given that modernism above all longed, in its purity and loathing of the rotting excesses of late 19th-century art, not to be decadent, that would be a problem. Too much money and too many reputations have been invested in MoMA to risk it all on such a gamble. Despite the cutting-edge pose it maintains for suburbanites determined to expose their children to “serious” art lest they grow up putting velvet Elvises on their walls, MoMA is a conservative investor. It must

THEY REALIZED THEY COULDN'T TAKE THEIR STANDARD-DEFINING 20TH-CENTURY COLLECTION DOWN THE **RABBIT HOLE OF POSTMODERNISM** **WITHOUT SACRIFICING IT.**

the Museum of Natural History—and as needful of being packed into well-lit glass display cases for comfortable preservation. The cat is finally out of the bag, after having been proclaimed by serious philosophers of art like Arthur Danto since about 1970. This is the mausoleum of modern art.

The average culture-vulture reading the Arts & Leisure section of the Sunday *New York Times*, let alone her epigones munching canapés at gallery openings in

mannerist neo-Dada, to use the precisely correct art historical terminology. The Shock of the New has given way to the numbing familiarity of the ceremonial Violating of the Taboos, as if art were an angry pagan god needing an endless supply of sacrificial virgins to be palliated.

Art schools are well organized to supply these virgins, but one can’t help but feel sorry for the earnest black-clad youth wandering the galleries. They

preserve its portfolio from dilution by the artistic equivalent of dot-com stocks.

This is, of course, the real key: MoMA is not fundamentally about art at all but about cultural authority and who has it—that is, the money and the collection to pull off its astringent demonstrativeness of what constitutes modern taste. When mere money has palled and political power bores, cultural power is the last prize the elite reaches for, if only to distinguish the serious *haute-bourgeois* from the Lear Jet rabble. Thus derives MoMA's redeeming virtue: its ability to say "yes" and "no" to things, to reassert the necessary concept of cultural hierarchy, even if measured by the warped standards of modernism. It denies that anything goes. Such relativistic horrors, with their attendant descent into Blade Runner multiculturalism, are postmodern and clearly do not belong on these antiseptic walls.

MoMA's board is blue chip; most of its members would be equally plausible running any of its sponsoring corporations. It is no accident that artistic modernism has congealed into the official style, the tractor art, of corporate globalism. Its new HQ is nothing so much as the Lenin's Tomb of Modern Art, where the once-revolutionary object is embalmed for eternity so its inheritors can pose on top of it and remind the masses from whence their authority derives. (Not to mention remind themselves that they are a conquering elite that overthrew, with Freudian glee, the elite that came before.)

The most honest part of MoMA, my favorite part, has always been its store, where one can buy forks and furniture confident that they conform to the aesthetic standards proclaimed correct. Thankfully, it remains unchanged. Somebody, somewhere, can't help telling the truth. ■

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The Bush administration signed a presidential finding in late summer that authorized the Defense Department to undertake offensive, covert operations against Iran.

The finding stopped short of calling for regime change, but a White House source believes that such a policy will be adopted by the administration in January after the start of the second term. The finding is significant. It signals that the offensive against Iran has intensified, and policy towards Tehran is on the same course previously seen vis-à-vis Iraq. According to a well-placed source, the Pentagon is already active in running operations out of Azerbaijan and western Afghanistan, some utilizing members of the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) Iranian opposition group that is based in northern Iraq. Israeli advisers are reported to be operating with the teams in Azerbaijan, and the Turks are also co-operating, relying on a Pentagon pledge that no independent Kurdish state will be permitted in northern Iraq. The Pentagon is urging the State Department to remove MEK from its list of terrorist groups so that the organization can set up joint operations more freely. A number of neoconservatives have been openly suggesting that MEK is not a terrorist group at all since its principal objective is to "liberate" Iran. The State Department is reported to be resistant to the change in MEK's status but will undoubtedly be more co-operative after Colin Powell is gone. The Pentagon policymakers involved recognize that the U.S. does not have sufficient resources to invade Iran, but they believe that the country can be destabilized from outside, relying on the Iranian people's dislike of the regime of the mullahs to produce a popular uprising. Critics of the program note that the same wishful thinking that went into Iraq policy will likely apply in Iran, with similar results.



A second, broader counterterrorism finding also permits the Pentagon to operate unilaterally in a number of countries where there is a perception of a clear and evident terrorist threat.

They include Indonesia, Algeria, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, and Syria. A number of the countries are friendly to the U.S., and several are major trading partners. Most have been co-operating in the War on Terror. The special reconnaissance/intelligence teams are being directed by Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence Steve Cambone and his deputy Lt. Gen. William Boykin. The finding confirms the Pentagon's *de facto* takeover of paramilitary operations designated "covert action" that would have previously been run by the CIA, a transfer of authority that the White House has only admitted to be "reviewing." Congress clearly favors covert action remaining where it is, however. Many uniformed officers in Defense are leery of covert operations because they are difficult to manage in an environment as structured as the Army. The CIA operates under more flexible ground rules and is much less encumbered by the military's support mechanism. Nevertheless, a number of Pentagon civilians who were heavily involved in Iraq War planning, most particularly Paul Wolfowitz, Abe Shulsky, and Doug Feith, are eager to take over all covert action activities, stripping the CIA of the responsibility.

Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates, an international security consultancy.

Arts & Letters

FILM

[*Ocean's Twelve*]

Not So Dirty Dozen

By Steve Sailer

AS A SEQUEL to a remake, "Ocean's Twelve" sounds dire. Yet in the Year of the Dud, this gleeful heist comedy with George Clooney, Brad Pitt, and Julia Roberts manages to become one of 2004's smartest, most entertaining films by rewriting some of the rules for a commercial screenplay.

Today ought to be a new golden age of movies. Special effects, cinematography, and sound are all steadily progressing. Audiences can now absorb more rapid editing. Budgets are bigger than ever, averaging \$64 million in 2003, so sets and costumes are better than ever. Able character actors are everywhere, and today's big stars have broader skills than their glamorous but repetitious predecessors.

Still, judging from 2004's festival of ineptitude, Hollywood is drifting ever farther from consistent competence. The weak links have been half-baked scripts. Would-be screenwriters throng workshops, so there should be abundant talent available. Sadly, writers and the producers who hire them have worked themselves into self-defeating ruts.

Most remakes fail because producers commission updates of overachieving films, such as Frank Sinatra's "The Manchurian Candidate," in which everything clicked. In contrast, Sinatra's "Ocean's 11" was a notorious under-achiever. The Rat Pack signed on to play

WWII commandos reuniting to knock over five Las Vegas casinos so they could film during the day and croon in the stage shows at night. But they forgot to schedule any snooze time, so they sleepwalked through their roles.

Still, the core concept of an action-comedy caper showcasing male camaraderie was appealing. After Ted Griffin penned a sharp new script, veteran producer Jerry Weintraub and ace director Steven Soderbergh, an Oscar-winner for "Traffic," had little trouble assembling a killer cast. "Ocean's Eleven" was one of the biggest hits of 2001 with adult audiences, who appreciated its 1940s Howard Hawks feel.

The visual chemistry of the gang's leaders was memorable because Pitt exemplifies the scruffy, boyish-looking stars of post-'60s pop culture, while Clooney, who is only three years older but appears to hail from an earlier generation, is a throwback to Clark Gable's era of glamour, when actors tried to look like grown men.

Sequels often fail because the screenplays aren't ready by the time the cameras must start rolling. So Weintraub instead bought newcomer George Nolfi's strong, already-finished script about cat burglars in Europe, "Honor Among Thieves," and had him and Soderbergh adapt it for the ensemble.

Globalization means that about half of box-office revenue now comes from non-English speakers, who admire explosions more than hard-to-translate verbal wit. "Ocean's Twelve," though, reverses the usual ratio, discarding almost all the bang-bang-boom-boom in favor of overlapping jokes delivered at screwball comedy velocity.

In "Ocean's Twelve," these nonviolent crooks are more endearing than ever, making Fagin's tuneful pickpockets in the musical "Oliver" seem as paranoid and murderous as Quentin Tarantino's

"Reservoir Dogs." The new film imagines a crime world descended from some genteel English Ealing Studio comedy, where there is both honor and consummate professionalism among thieves.

Nolfi understands Griffin's insight that with a cast this likeable, the audience will forgive the inevitable stupid plot twists as long as there is an abundance of clever moments.

One of modern Hollywood's hokiest clichés is the multiethnic crime gang. (Real criminals prefer to work with networks of relatives because they can't trust random felons.) When you see a multicultural gang, you can be sure the movie is going to be lame—except the "Ocean's" franchise, which slyly skewered the Eleven's contrived diversity. When Clooney asked Pitt whom they should recruit, he replied, "Off the top of my head, I'd say you're looking at a Boesky, a Jim Brown, a Miss Daisy, two Jethros, and a Leon Spinks, not to mention the biggest Ella Fitzgerald ever."

Nolfi dreams up even more elaborate pseudo-argot that he leaves hilariously undefined, knowing that any explanation couldn't live up to your imagination. At one point, desperately trying to improvise a plan after their first one fails catastrophically, the burglars riff through their voluminous knowledge of their trade's curiously titled ruses, immediately rejecting each as impractical until they pause upon the promising "Hell in a Handbasket." They glance at each other with hope, until Matt Damon interjects, "Nah, can't train a cat that fast."

The soundtrack provides delightful counterpoint. Keep your ears open for "Souls Along the Way," which was composed by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), who also appeared in Soderbergh's "Traffic." ■

Rated PG-13 for language.

BOOKS

[*Our Oldest Enemy: A History of America's Disastrous Relationship With France*, John J. Miller and Mark Molesky, Doubleday, 304 pages]

French Lessons

By Robert O. Paxton

THE MYTH OF ETERNAL Franco-American friendship is fair game. John J. Miller, a journalist with *National Review*, and Mark Molesky, assistant professor of history at Seton Hall University, offer a counter-myth: that France has directed unstinting malice against America from the beginning.

The book opens with a blood-curdling narrative of the Deerfield massacre (1704), when Indians abetted by French-Canadian authorities attacked English settlers in western Massachusetts. They killed men, women, and children, scalped some of the victims and ate some of their flesh, and abducted hostages. The writing has verve, and the reader's face tingles with anger.

But Miller/Molesky's account is one-sided. It portrays Indian violence as something the French deliberately provoked and exploited. When the Anglo-Americans' Indian allies commit an atrocity, as happened under the young Washington near Pittsburgh in May 1754, it seems an unfortunate accident. Miller/Molesky see the French and Indians as aggressors, the American colonists as their innocent victims. In a broader perspective, however, the Anglo-Americans were expelling the French from North America, and the French were resisting, sometimes cruelly. The French had priority—Quebec's foundation in 1608 predated the Mayflower by a dozen years—but far fewer settlers. It seems a little forgetful to claim, "the United States does not pose and has never posed any threat to their country."

The French weren't even the first who resisted Anglo-American expansion. Spain is really "our oldest enemy." When the English colonists in the Carolinas pushed southwards after founding Charleston in 1670, using Indian surrogates to destroy Spanish forts and missions in what is now Georgia and Florida, the Spanish fought back (admittedly less vigorously than the French). In 1680, they raided English settlements near Charleston. For a similar book about "America's disastrous relationship with Spain" an author could simply trawl through history for the nasty parts: frontier conflicts in late 17th-century Florida, Spain's stranglehold on New Orleans in the late 18th century, the Alamo, the Maine, Hemingway fighting Franco in the bars of Pamplona.

So why single out France? France obviously gets the goat of many Americans. German Chancellor Schroeder surpassed Chirac in the spring of 2003, rejecting any military operation in Iraq even with UN approval. But neither he nor the Russians aroused much popular anger here. Miller/Molesky show no curiosity about this difference or about whether any of the friction with France could come from this side of the Atlantic.

Perhaps a clash of styles provokes a special virulence: the elegantly literary French condescending to nice Americans. A more likely cause is rivalry between two countries that feel entitled, as first democracies, to offer universal moral lessons. Still more likely is American over-expectation based on our aid to the French. We have indeed helped France with thousands of young lives, and in my experience most French admit they "owe their liberty" to the United States, as Jean-Marie Colombani, editor of the Paris daily *Le Monde*, wrote in his famous editorial "We are all Americans" on Sept. 13, 2001 (a passage omitted by Miller/Molesky, who denounce this article heatedly as "an anti-American diatribe of extraordinary virulence and rage"). But often we have not helped them (as in Algeria or at Suez), or helped them late (as in 1917 and 1944),

or caused "collateral damage" like the 50,000 civilian dead in French cities razed by Anglo-American aerial bombardment during World War II. We helped them when we thought it was in our interest. Nothing sours a relationship faster than one side's overdeveloped sense of largesse.

So the Franco-American story is indeed replete with conflict. What Miller/Molesky have done is furnish maximum negative spin and place most blame on the French. A good example is the famous sea battle off the east coast of England on Sept. 23, 1779, between John Paul Jones's *Bonhomme Richard* and the pride of the British Navy, HMS *Serapis*. Every American schoolboy knows Jones's proud response (probably apocryphal) to the British captain's summons to surrender: "I have not yet begun to fight!"

Jones's squadron included three French ships. One French captain, Pierre Landais, aboard *Alliance*, inexplicably held back. Later, when *Serapis* and *Bonhomme Richard* were heavily engaged, wreathed in smoke, Landais came up and fired grapeshot into both combatants. Miller/Molesky have him fire only at Jones's ship, in typical French perfidy. They credit later rumors that Landais wanted to sink Jones's ship and claim the victory for himself. They omit details that don't fit a Francophobic version. The other French captains defeated British ships, though perhaps less dashing than Jones. No French perfidy there. As for Landais, his behavior during the trip home to Boston in *Alliance* was so bizarre (he threatened his main American supporter, Arthur Lee, with a carving knife during a quarrel over a roast turkey) that on return he was court-martialed and removed from service in the infant U.S. Navy. Many contemporaries considered Landais insane. Madness, not Frenchness, seems to have been the problem.

Miller/Molesky portray French malevolence toward Americans as so uniform and unchanging over the centuries as to seem virtually genetic. Their French are, with occasional exceptions like Lafayette and Raymond Aron, cowardly, cynical,

duplicitous, and overfed, bullies when strong and craven when weak. Their Americans are nearly always fair and well meaning. Miller/Molesky write skillfully, with a gift for pejorative shadings. Their French characters never simply "speak"; they "sneer" or "scoff." Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin is "oily," Marshal Pétain is "a well-groomed thug and bigot," Napoleon a "dwarfish hero." Count Vergennes, foreign minister in 1776, thought God "had endowed his country with a special importance." These arrogant chauvinists all considered their country superior to others, destined to rule the world.

If Americans have similar thoughts, or deal with the French in a thin-skinned, uncooperative, or self-interested way, Miller/Molesky approve. In 1917, U.S. commanding general John J. Pershing adamantly refused to let his troops come under French supreme command (as even the British accepted in the emergency of July 1918). When Charles de Gaulle takes the identical position in 1944 or 1966, he is an unreasonable chauvinist.

French aid to the American War of Independence is the Francophile's exhibit number one. But Miller/Molesky affirm that the French were only pursuing national self-interest in fighting the British—and they fought badly to boot. Afterwards, they showed their true colors by trying to block American westward expansion and preying upon American shipping.

But are not governments supposed to serve their perceived national interest? "Realists" or "pragmatists" in foreign policy expect nothing else. In their view, successful diplomacy is the skillful persuasion of other countries that a desired course of action is in the mutual interest—as in the important role France plays today in the NATO peacekeeping force in Afghanistan and in sharing intelligence information about terrorists with the United States. (The latter, at least, is acknowledged in this book.)

Miller/Molesky, by contrast, are idealists in foreign policy. For them, alliances rest not on interest but on

affection. They divide the world into friends and foes. A friend is not "difficult to control." Since French governments, with broad public support, pursue an independent foreign policy, France is our foe. This book evaluates as "fawning" the admiration of American realists like Kissinger and Nixon for Charles de Gaulle, whose proud and independent France they considered generally an asset in the Cold War. An idealist foreign policy sounds superficially more "moral" than the calculation of national interest, but it leads easily to self-righteous crusading.

Miller/Molesky admit that de Gaulle was good for France. But since they equate alliance with subservience, a Gaullist France must be bad for the United States. Far from reaching obsessively for France's ancient glory, as this book interprets him, de Gaulle was the quintessential realist. He understood lucidly the limits to France's power, which enabled him to take the hard but correct decision for Algerian independence. Thereafter he was determined to use his limited power to the utmost to give the French a sense that their country still mattered. His complicated game of vigorous support for Washington during tension over Berlin, Cuba, and Czechoslovakia, alternating with quests for elbowroom during calmer periods, is simply incomprehensible to Miller/Molesky. So they falsify his language, perhaps unconsciously. They quote de Gaulle claiming to be the leader of "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals," but that famous phrase actually offered Khrushchev "détente ... from the Atlantic to the Urals."

Miller/Molesky are vulnerable to such errors because all their French quotations except one, as far as I can determine, come secondhand from someone else's extracts in English. This flagrant misquotation of de Gaulle came from Brian Crozier, an Australian journalist who imagined that de Gaulle was a crypto-communist. Other factual errors about France mar this book, many trivial, some not. Wagram in 1806 was not France's last victory (the Marne?), and though many French citizens applauded

José Bové's famous assault on a McDonald's, Chirac's government prosecuted him and sent him to prison. At least the authors cannot be accused of contamination by over-familiarity with the details of French life and history.

We must admit that Miller/Molesky sometimes let France off the hook. Anti-Semitism does not bother them overly; they give it half a page. They utter not a peep about the French army's use of torture in Algeria, or about Chirac's nuclear test in the Pacific in the face of international disapproval. Can we guess why?

The French Enlightenment, however, takes heavy fire. Its preference for theory over practice, the archetypical French vice, is accused of spawning 20th-century communism and fascism. Voltaire, astonishingly, "propped up delusions of national glory" instead of "speaking truth to power," and Rousseau wanted "society razed to the ground before it could be built again," an idea whose "direct outgrowth" was the violence of the French Revolution. It is surprising to see a Harvard Ph.D. in intellectual history forget that the Enlightenment flourished also in Philadelphia, Berlin, and Edinburgh (Adam Smith), and was frequently pragmatic (the first smallpox vaccinations, for example). Its principal heritage was democratic and libertarian (including the American Constitution), and only by perversion did it contribute something to modern totalitarianism.

Miller/Molesky skewer deconstruction gleefully. Ironically, as other reviewers have already observed, their manifest conviction that power consists of shaping the images by which we understand our past makes them closet disciples of Derrida and Foucault. In that spirit they have constructed a wilfully one-track image of the complex history of Franco-American relations. Readers looking for reasons to hate the French, who tolerate selective and slanted scholarship, will applaud. ■

Robert O. Paxton is Professor Emeritus of History at Columbia University and author of Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order.

[*Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire*, Anne Norton, Yale University Press, 256 pages]

What Would Strauss Do?

By Michael C. Desch

AMERICANS ARE NOT intellectual people: we have just re-elected a president who prides himself on not reading the nation's leading newspapers. And yet, according to much breathless reporting and a new book by University of Pennsylvania political theorist Anne Norton, the anti-intellectual Bush administration is actually in the thrall of a cabal of intellectuals initiated into the mysteries of a conservative cult by an obscure émigré political theorist named Leo Strauss. Ironically, a nation of know-nothings is secretly guided by adherents of an esoteric political tradition rooted in a grand conversation among philosophers ranging from ancient Greece to Weimar Germany.

As the number of individuals in prominent government positions with ties to Strauss and his students has grown, interest in the impact of the late University of Chicago professor's thought has also increased. Articles have recently appeared in the *New York Review of Books*, *New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *New York Times*, and many other periodicals. Books such as James Mann's *The Rise of the Vulcans* and Robert Devigne's *Recasting Conservatism* have also explored this subject. Norton's *Leo Strauss and the Politics of the American Empire* is thus part of a growing pile of paper.

Though Strauss died in 1973, concern about the influence of his disciples on American policy did not manifest itself until the Reagan administration. "Straussianism" was less evident in the first Bush and Clinton administrations, but Straussians are once again prominent under George W. Bush. The most well

known is Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, the architect of the Iraq War. But others, such as Abram Shulsky, the Director of the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans and Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, are also mentioned as conduits of Strauss's influence. Outside of government, *Weekly Standard* editor William Kristol and Project for the New American Century executive director Gary Schmitt are among the public intellectuals tied to Strauss or his students.

Norton's book is both analytical and autobiographical—she studied at the University of Chicago with Strauss's students and others who would later become prominent political Straussians. "I would never have thought of writing about [Straussians]," she begins, "but things changed. Certain of the people I had known came to power. The nation went to war. Because the nation is at war, and because the Straussians are prominent among those who govern, the accounts I had been given are no longer part of a curious personal history but elements of a common legacy."

One problem with the book is that it is based mostly on her recollections of things she heard and saw many years ago. The book, therefore, probably shares many of the evidentiary problems common to "recovered memories" and gossip. But its most significant weakness is that Norton never separates her personal experience, both positive and negative, with Straussians in graduate school from her analysis of Strauss's influence in Washington today. She remains deeply ambivalent about Strauss and never provides a clear answer the \$64,000 question: how much influence do the teachings of Strauss really exercise on the Bush administration?

I also studied at Chicago, but after Norton, and my specialty was international relations, not political theory. I did, however, take a few courses with prominent Straussians like Joseph Cropsey and Nathan Tarcov. For three years I was also a junior fellow in Allan Bloom's John M. Olin Center for the Inquiry Into the Theory and Practice of

Democracy, where I met many other academic Straussians including Leon Kass, Thomas Pangle, Clifford Orwin, Werner Dannhauser, and Ralph Lerner. Through the Olin Center, I also became acquainted with such political Straussians as Shulsky, Kristol, Alan Keyes, Frank Fukuyama, and William Galston. There is much I admire about academic Straussianism, but my intellectual and policy proclivities have taken me in a different direction.

Norton's reminiscences evoked a good deal of nostalgia for me. Her portrait of Cropsey, in particular, brought back fond memories of listening to him lecture on Plato's *Republic* with subtle wit and penetrating insight. Her account of the Straussians' distinct sense of hierarchy and their penchant for the *double entendre* also reminded me of the time Bloom called me a "hard-headed realist." Since I was by then enamored of realists like E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, and Kenneth Waltz, I might have taken this as an unqualified compliment. But as Bloom was a student of Friedrich Nietzsche, I knew that there was also a reminder in his remark that my practical bent may have led me to ignore more important philosophical issues.

In some places, Norton paints flattering portraits of Strauss and his academic followers—"The first students of Strauss I knew at Chicago were my professors Joseph Cropsey and Ralph Lerner. To listen to them read a text was to go into the garden, into a wilderness, into an ocean and breathe. They were scandalous, they were daring, they took your breath away with their honesty. They were precise, disciplined, ascetic, reverent, heretical, blasphemous, and fearless."

Like Mark Lilla in his two superb essays in the *New York Review of Books*, Norton distinguishes between Strauss and his academic followers and the political Straussians in Washington. The latter, in her account, are academic failures forced to settle for government jobs, who in their ignorance have tried to turn Strauss into a contemporary neo-conservative. For this she blames Bloom

for vulgarizing Straussianism and making it into little more than neoconservatism with a better intellectual pedigree.

In other places, Norton implicates Strauss more directly in the political agenda of his Washington epigones. First, she suggests that Strauss's adherence to "natural right"—the notion that justice should be based on nature rather than convention—led him to argue that because we are not all equally endowed with the same intellectual faculties, only select elites were fit to rule. Second, given the corrosive effect of this anti-egalitarian truth, Norton suggests that Strauss took his discovery that the great philosophers concealed their dangerous truths in their writings and recommended that policymakers do the same in speaking to us. Finally, Norton draws a line from Strauss's conclusion that war and struggle are necessary to bring out the best in man from his reading of Nietzsche and Carl Schmitt, to the neoconservatives' enthusiasm for establishing an American empire.

Writing in this vein, Norton sounds like Strauss critics such as Shadia Drury, who cast him as the Professor Moriarty of the neoconservative network. Proponents of this view point to two sets of links between Strauss's thought and the neoconservative agenda. Certain current

or former government officials either studied with Strauss himself (Shulsky and Wolfowitz) or with Strauss's students (Fukuyama and Kristol) and share a set of conservative premises. These include anti-communism; skepticism about the efficacy of international institutions; a preoccupation with the concept of the "political" as producing unending conflict; an endorsement of "natural right" as the foundation for domestic institutions; the belief that "virtue," as well as self-interest, matters in political life; a repugnance toward the relativism in modern liberal society; a marked skepticism about the potential for the physical and social sciences to fundamentally ameliorate the human condition; a pronounced anti-egalitarian stance; and a deep wariness about utopian political projects. Another potential area of common ground between Strauss and the modern neoconservative movement was his interest in the relationship between Judaism and modern liberalism and particularly his endorsement of Zionism.

However, the relationship between academic Straussianism and neoconservatism is much more complicated. There is no doubt that Strauss embraced some conservative political positions and preferred Goldwater and Nixon to

Kennedy and McGovern. But while Strauss may have been conservative in his practical politics, he was a philosophical radical. As he put it: "Philosophy is the attempt to replace opinion by knowledge; but opinion is the element of the city, hence philosophy is subversive, hence the philosopher must write in such a way that he will improve rather than subvert the city."

For Strauss, Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger were the two great philosophers of late modernity. The fact that both were directly or indirectly linked to National Socialism must have made him acutely aware that mixing philosophical radicalism and practical politics can lead to disaster. Not surprisingly, Strauss concluded that prudence dictates that one choose between the life of philosophy (his choice) and sustained political engagement.

In contrast, the political Straussians, who have now become largely indistinguishable from neoconservatives, are radicals, clearly lacking the prudence that Strauss advocated in practical politics. Political Straussians and their neoconservative allies argue that the spread of democracy is a panacea for many of America's global problems. But the intellectual justification for such a policy could hardly have been Strauss, who was a critic of modern liberalism and democracy. Strauss maintained that political regimes encompass more than just their formal institutions but also depend upon the habits, mores, and customs of a society. It is hard to imagine that he would be sanguine about the prospects for the promotion of democracy in countries lacking these prerequisites. Indeed, Strauss's view ought to lead to caution, rather than enthusiasm, for making regime-change the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. To find philosophical support for such a policy, one has to look to liberal thinkers such as Kant or Montesquieu. As Lilla argues, what has happened since 1973 was not a Straussian takeover of neoconservatism but rather a hijacking of Strauss's thought or at least the kidnapping of some of his less astute students.

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Moreover, there are reasons political Straussians would have become neo-conservatives aside from exposure to Strauss's thought. Some, like Wolfowitz, came from family backgrounds similar to those of non-Straussian neoconservatives. Wolfowitz's father was a committed Zionist, as are many neoconservatives, and both father and son were at Cornell during the tumultuous sixties, when many Americans found other elements of the neoconservative agenda attractive. Though Wolfowitz did his graduate work at Chicago when Strauss was there, and even took a few classes with him, Mann and Norton both report that defense intellectual Albert Wohlstetter exercised a much greater influence over him. It was Wohlstetter who connected Wolfowitz with the emerging neoconservative policy network in Washington, D.C. in the early 1970s, where he would forge alliances with Richard Perle and Fred Iklé. In other words, many political Straussians could easily have become neoconservatives even if Strauss had never escaped Germany in the early 1930s.

Political theorist Paul Gottfried suggests that there is no difference between intellectual Straussianism and neoconservatism, a view Norton sometimes seems to echo. She focuses on Francis Fukuyama, author of the most influential political Straussian tract *The End of History*, who has also long been identified with neoconservatism. But this view that Straussianism inevitably leads to neoconservatism cannot explain Fukuyama's recent break with the neoconservative consensus on the Iraq War and Bush's foreign policy generally.

None of this is to suggest that those of us who are appalled by the neoconservative agenda will find Strauss fully congenial, but rather that he should not be dismissed as just a proto-neoconservative. Unfortunately, Norton's book might lead many readers to do just that. ■

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[The Conservative Bookshelf: Essential Works That Impact Today's Conservative Thinkers, Chilton Williamson Jr., Citadel Press, 329 pages]

The Best of the West

By Kevin Lynch

THIS IS A BOOKSHELF with exacting specifications. The volumes gathered here will not appeal to conservatives committed to the *status quo* or political pragmatism, nor to those who take their conservatism prefaced with a neo. These last may have penetrated the Reagan and Bush 43 administrations, but as Chilton Williamson explains, global crusades have never been conservative enthusiasms.

Williamson has distilled 50 works that represent the conservative canon, the best of the Western tradition. Accompanying each selection is an essay—this is not a book of excerpts—in which he states his case for including the work. A few of the writers here may appear more suited to another kind of bookshelf, but Williamson ably defends all his choices, including the most mischievous. Besides, after almost 14 years as literary editor of *National Review* and about as many as book-review editor and columnist for *Chronicles*, it has to be allowed that he has a passing acquaintance with conservatism in all its manifestations.

For Williamson, conservatism bears little resemblance to the caricature routinely drawn in the media. Modern society, he says, has largely succeeded in confining what is a broadly informed religious, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic tradition into a narrow party line. But conservatism involves more than maintaining Republican control of Congress and the White House. It permeates every aspect of man's life, from his religion, culture, and politics to his relations with his fellow man.

Citing Russell Kirk's dictum that cul-

ture arises from religion, Williamson accords religion first place, starting with the Bible. Though space is given to non-believers on this bookshelf, its builder is a man of faith, which he calls, I believe rightly, the dominant component of the conservative mind. For Christian conservatives, as well as those who profess no religion, the Bible is, he says, "the Book of Books, from which—however indirectly or confrontationally—all books since classical times have been made."

There are three other books in the religion category, two by Christians, C.S. Lewis (*The Abolition of Man*) and St. Augustine (*The City of God*), both brilliant defenders of the faith against the pagans of their day, the God-centered versus the self-centered, as someone has said. The final essay here is devoted to a surprising choice: *Meditations*, by the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius. Born in AD 121, he was among the last of the Stoics, but in his aphorisms Williamson finds a "Saintly Pagan" who anticipates the ideals of the Christian ruler: fairness, liberality, humanity, Christian wisdom and judgment, and self-control. "When you are outraged by somebody's impudence," Marcus Aurelius writes, "ask yourself at once, 'Can the world exist without impudent people?' It cannot: so do not ask for impossibilities." Williamson acknowledges, however, that the emperor had a dark side. When it came to Christians, his vaunted self-control escaped him. He persecuted them savagely. This explains why among his sayings nowhere can be found the maxim that if you can't walk the walk, don't talk the talk.

After religion comes politics, the book's largest category, with essays on 13 works that unarguably belong in the canon. Here a distinction made early in the book between types of conservatives becomes apparent. There are pragmatic ones whose beliefs differ little from their liberal neighbors', and then there are those whose beliefs are founded uncompromisingly on eternal principles. For clarity, these last Williamson describes as Rightists (or paleoconservatives, to be sure there is no confusion with the neo-

cons), and the majority of the authors in this section can be thus called. Among them are names long established in the conservative pantheon: Edmund Burke (*Reflections on the Revolution in France*), Joseph de Maistre (*Considerations on France*), Russell Kirk (*The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot*), Richard Weaver (*Ideas Have Consequences*), James Burnham (*Suicide of the West*), and Whittaker Chamber (*Witness*). There are also less famous names, such as Michael Oakeshott (*Rationalism in Politics*) and Kenneth Minogue (*The Liberal Mind*). Familiar or unfamiliar, after reading Williamson's essay on each, there is no doubt that all are essential.

Kirk's *Conservative Mind* told the founding generation of the American Right that they descended from a respected intellectual tradition ranging back to the 18th century and could boast of prominent names in every age since then. Though Kirk, as is generally true of the breed, could never be called optimistic (at least when it came to man's earthly situation), he saw reason to be pleased as he surveyed America in the early 1950s. Communism was discredited, the New and Fair Deals were blessedly over, and voters had elected a Republican president. But by the early '90s, as Kirk looked back he realized his giddiness was misplaced. Liberalism kept rolling along. The state had grown, as had modern man's appetite for the goods the state provides. Weaver was more prescient. Written in 1948, *Ideas Have Consequences* doesn't have an optimistic line in it. Yet, as Williamson shows, it is irresistible. No one is more clear-eyed than Weaver in his analysis of the degradation of Western culture.

After politics, Williamson next chooses 10 books about society. Here again the list is broad as well as deep, from Alexis de Tocqueville (*Democracy in America*) and Henry Adams (*The Education of Henry Adams*) to John Lukacs (*Historical Consciousness: or, The Remembered Past*), William F. Buckley Jr. (*God and Man at Yale*), and Joseph Sobran (*Single Issues*). It should be noted that James Burnham, whose *Managerial*

Revolution appears in this section, has the distinction of being the only writer with two books in the collection. But it is Sobran's *Single Issues*, published in 1983, that speaks most directly to the moral issues that we are told are so relevant now. Its subject is abortion, and Sobran confronts it eloquently and honestly. As Williamson writes, what makes him such a deadly critic of liberal thought is that Sobran pays "liberal ideas the compliment of giving them his close attention." Our society, says Sobran, requires us to love "our neighbor, our neighbor's neighbor and our neighbor's neighbor's neighbor, but not our sons and daughters." Here, Williamson says, is a master of the essayist's craft.

The next category, economics, gets the prize for its utter audacity. Adam Smith, Mises, Hayek, and Friedman have been endlessly praised and anthologized by conservatives, but only one of them, Hayek (*The Road to Serfdom*), turns up here, and never before has he been surrounded by a more curious band of "economists." There is a pope, Leo XIII, and his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (*On the Condition of Workers*); a literary critic and historian, Edmund Wilson (*The Cold War and the Income Tax: A Protest*); a prolific poet and essayist, Hilaire Belloc (*The Servile State*); and, finally, a genuine economist, Wilhelm Röpke (*The Social Crisis of Our Time*). Each one, Williamson shows, understands the central role that private ownership of property plays in preserving man's dignity and freedom.

Besides being an editor and columnist, Williamson is also a novelist, so it's natural that his bookshelf includes writers of fiction. There are giants here: T.S. Eliot ("The Waste Land"), Evelyn Waugh (*A Handful of Dust*), G.K. Chesterton (*The Napoleon of Notting Hill*), Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*), Flannery O'Connor (*The Habit of Being*), Jean Raspail (*The Camp of the Saints*). Of these, Williamson suggests that Chesterton is least read today. I hope that is not true, for he is a witty and wise writer on an astonishing variety of topics, especially religion. On vivid dis-

play in *Napoleon of Notting Hill* is his lifelong sympathy for the local community against the encroachment of the state.

Perhaps this section's most unusual work is O'Connor's *Habit of Being*. Though she was a novelist and short story writer, *Habit of Being* is neither. It is a collection of her letters that, Williamson says, amounts to an autobiography of a "literary genius." Because of illness, O'Connor was homebound most of her life. Yet her writing made the world seek her out, and she wrote back so entrancingly that many admirers consider *Habit of Being* her finest book.

Then there is *The Camp of the Saints*, a story of immigration. A million men, women, and children, on a hundred rusty ships, leave the poverty of India and sail for the West. At three in the afternoon on Good Friday, the Last Chance Armada passes through the Straits of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean. Novelist Raspail is also something of a scientist—he has created the perfect acid test for those who say they favor unrestricted immigration.

The final section of *The Conservative Bookshelf*, "The Present Day," contains authors and titles familiar to readers of this magazine, including Peter Brimelow (*Alien Nation*), Patrick Buchanan (*The Death of the West*), Samuel Francis (*Revolution From the Middle*), and Joseph Scotchie (*Revolt From the Heartland*). Here the differences between paleos and what Williamson calls the bipartisan managerial elite become plain. The elite thinks big. It wants a global economy, democracies modeled on the U.S. sprouting up worldwide, and mass immigration, making America the "first universal nation." But a globe-straddling, multicultural America has little appeal for the writers here. They want something more inspiring. They want to rebuild a republic of self-reliant citizens who value the creeds and cultures of the West. In other words, they fit perfectly with the other writers gathered in this splendid collection. ■

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[*I Am Charlotte Simmons*, Tom Wolfe, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 676 pages]

Bonfire of the Varsities

By Dana B. Vachon

THE LIGHT! Yellow. Bright. Streaming through the trees that tower up to but not above the gargoyles of the great Gothic campus. It had required three SAT tutors, two AP tutors, and one math tutor, but I had been accepted. I was a Duke Man, surrounded by other Duke men and women. They were hungover too, emerging from the residence halls, sticky with the shared oils of Friday night, pattering into Alpine Bagels to drink off beer with orange juice. Oh, the pain. I vaguely remembered coming to Duke for academics. Three hundred pages behind in *The Poetry of Lord Byron*. I was only doing well in *Introduction to Jazz*—and everyone did well in *Intro to Jazz*.

The students milled about the entrance to Alpine Bagels. Among them, standing beside his daughter, was a silver-haired gentleman in an immaculate gray suit. Tom Wolfe. I slowed to have a look, and his daughter introduced us. In 1989, Wolfe wrote a literary manifesto, “Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast,” in which he exhorted American novelists to go West, East, North, South—anywhere they pleased, so long as they placed the realities of American life at the core of their work. On a hung-over morning during my sophomore year, I was two of the Beast’s Billion Feet that Tom Wolfe had been stalking. I noticed his eyes: gathering, sorting, scanning, and finally reaching a conclusion as he read the lettering across my T-shirt. KAPPA SIGMA. In an act of hubris, we had printed 200 during the last spring’s big party, and we wore them like midshipmen with new tattoos.

“Kappa Sigma. I’ve heard that they are one of the best ...”

The best! Just last night I had lured a senior into my bunk. A sophomore and a senior! Triumph! Lauren ... somebody. Of course, it would be uncool to be excited about being so cool. Best to be self-effacing, but witty.

“For whatever that’s worth. I think it was started by a bunch of very angry Southerners after the Civil War ...”

He said something about necromancing and his *alma mater*, Washington & Lee. We parted ways. I went inside, and Wolfe continued his walk out on Duke’s campus and so many others.

It was quite a walk.

In *I Am Charlotte Simmons*, Wolfe gives us a *tabula rasa* from the Blue Ridge mountains who attends prestigious Dupont University only to find herself caught in the prevailing cultural, moral, and human maelstrom of American college life at the turn of the century. We all walked past buildings at Duke, but Wolfe seems to have seen through them.

Each of the primary characters in this book represents a leading strain of youth, full of ambition and flaws. Adam Gellin is a scholarship student who has reduced all of life to SAT logic. Dupont:

TO BELONG IS TO SHARE IN PATTERNS OF SPEECH, BEHAVIOR, PLEASURE, AND THOUGHT, AND IN RETURN RECEIVE NOT ONLY PRESENT IDENTITY BUT A FUTURE VISION OF ONESELF AS HEIR TO A VAGUELY DEFINED PROSPERITY.

Rhodes Scholarship: Policy-Making Appointment: Personal Fulfillment: Happiness. There are co-signatories to this theory—the Millennial Mutants. With the Mutants, Wolfe pokes about at the self-defeating ambition of the late-stage meritocrats who occupy the bottom rungs of collegiate social ladders, believing that one day accounts will be righted and with wry commentary, solid credentials, and flawless transcripts, they will rise to the top. The life of the mind exists chiefly as conduit to a life of prestige and power.

One of these fellows used to edit me at the *Duke Chronicle*. He and his friends would bicker for hours to deter-

mine who would write the next day’s editorial, which is strange because the editorials never really said anything. Wolfe captures the style of these would-be polemics, always striving for outrage but never really attaining it. He also nails the rivalry between this group and the fratters, who had what they wanted. My editor loved Pub Quiz trivia. He would scribble away the correct answers to question after question, then leer across the room at the frat boys. They might beat him for women, they might throw big parties, but he had the answers. Who among them knew that Millard Fillmore was the 13th president? At the end of the night, he would claim his free bar tab and all the respect that came with it. This fellow graduates from a top-ten law school this spring. Watch out world.

In Hoyt Thorpe and the young elitists of Saint Rays fraternity, Wolfe uncovers the gremlins of a culture hopelessly obsessed with wealth and status; these are the warped grandchildren of the old guard, the most privileged men of the Republic. But in 2004, something has gone wrong. Nobility no longer obliges;

it entitles. Yet entitlement is addictive, and so it also enslaves. Wolfe offers an updated understanding of fraternities as social lockboxes far removed from their bawdy Animal House progenitors. To belong is to share in patterns of speech, behavior, pleasure, and thought, and in return receive not only present identity but a future vision of oneself as heir to a vaguely defined prosperity. Thorpe is the poster boy for the young man willing to do anything to take his place in the bourgeois pantheon, preferably along the path of least resistance.

If the book succeeds in describing the new, virulent strain of frat boy, it is weakest in depicting its protagonist’s interac-

tions with the men of Saint Rays. The cultural separating mechanisms of most universities are incredibly efficient, and if Ms. Simmons is half as green as Wolfe would have us believe, she would have been kept away from the frat scene altogether. Christian groups, reading groups, volunteer groups—lots of things to do. Moreover, were Hoyt Thorpe nearly as shallow as Wolfe correctly makes him out to be, it is hard to imagine him risking reputation and clout on such a backwater bride. But there is a larger point, and the payoff in cultural commentary more than compensates for any implausibility. The deflowering and dehumanizing end met by North Carolina's proudest daughter at the hands of Greenwich, Connecticut's most vulgar son vividly animates one of the great themes of this book—the corrupting role of corrupted language.

In prime form, Wolfe has sifted through the conversation of a generation, dusting off every verb, examining each noun, and reeling at the role of sarcasm and irony in casual discourse.

Plato would write on this if he were alive, but the founder of New Journalism is the best we have and not entirely unqualified. Irony everywhere, thick and heavy. Stirred in with sarcasm then dripped upon every remark to the point that sincerity itself becomes ironic. That is when all is lost: morality and meaning become relative. Charlotte embodies these things, and along with them is doomed. Wolfe pulls no punches here. He lets us know where we stand in one of the most disturbing, chilling, mechanical, and dead-on-accurate descriptions of drunken collegiate coitus on record.

There are some hollow points. Jojo Johanssen is rather stupid for a character fated to experience an intellectual epiphany centering around a philosophy of justice. Yet if anyone has written a more compelling description of the pressures exerted on athletes by corporatized universities, I would very much like to read it. Wolfe is everywhere—the locker room, the coaches' office, the air-conditioned player suites. I often sat in the bleachers at basketball games and wondered what was going through the minds of Duke's basketball gods. You would see them driving about in \$60,000 cars, lunching with sunglassed men months before the NBA draft, saying hello to your girlfriend and calling her "baby." I often noticed Tom Wolfe sitting courtside at these games, and his account of the action on Dupont's court is every bit as gripping as *A Man In Full's* meat-freezer brawl. White flesh, black pecs, muscle armor, sweat-soaked, trash-talking, kidney-poking, hard-fouling. The pimped-out, blinged-up booster Escalades. The ghostwritten term papers. The magnificent hubris, all set to a hip-hop beat. (It is only with his treatment of hip hop, a venture to the outer edges of pop culture, that Wolfe seems to be showing his age. He has an enduring fascination with rap music, but never gets it right. His fictional rap impresario has a penchant for ending each of his rhymes with the strangely mid-'80s sign-off "Know'm saying?" This fellow might have been rapping in Brooklyn during the *Bonfire* era but

would never get signed to a label today.) Other would-be cultural tags also fall flat: Diesel Jeans, Britney Spears, Manolo Blahniks. But the world has Candace Bushnell for these things.

Tom Wolfe isn't after jeans, pop stars, or \$600 shoes. He is, after all, *Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast*. It moves! It groans! It matters. With *Bonfire of the Vanities*, Wolfe cornered it on Park Avenue. There, in a classic eight-bedroom, Sherman McCoy traded his bonds and cheated on his wife. Day in, day out he shaved little bits of gold from big chunks of gold and spent those nuggets fueling a life so full of nonsense that it had to come crashing down before he had any chance of finding himself. In *A Man in Full*, Wolfe introduced America to the Big Southern Real Estate Developer Charlie Croker, who basked in machismo derived chiefly from office towers and quail hunting, while his lowest employee discovered just what it means to be human. *Charlotte Simmons* is less overt but no less important.

The nation's leading universities look nothing like they did even 40 years ago. Streaming media flows in through cables, wires, and the air itself. Meritocratic admissions policies clash with human vanities and the old aristocracy. Recruiters comb campuses to cull elites of all definitions well before those elites have ever gotten around to defining themselves. Students attempt character development amid constant opportunities to quench their most base desires. Even on campuses dominated by cathedrals, no one will go on record to tell you that you have a soul. It is the immaculate, intricate, devastating treatment of this fractured-mirror world and its warping influence that makes this book so worthwhile. Tom Wolfe has done it again. He has tracked the Billion-Footed Beast from Penn to Stanford to Harvard to Yale to Princeton to Duke and finally to Dupont University, where he caught and caged the damn thing—bucking, breathing, vile, gorgeous—on display for all to see. ■

Dana B. Vachon writes from New York City.

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Fifth Columnists



They were originally Falangist sympathizers inside Madrid during the Spanish Civil War, prepared to side with General Franco's four columns that were

besieging the city. By 1939, as Germany and France were poised for war, French Fifth Columnists were busy undermining those who preached resistance to German demands. Until now, America has not had a Fifth Column in its midst, unless one counts the media during the war in Vietnam. (Roosevelt unfairly and needlessly detained Japanese-Americans during World War II as potential Fifth Columnists, when he should have been detaining some of his cabinet).

The first real case (Benedict Arnold aside) of Fifth Columnists inside America working for foreign interests are the neo-conservatives, the best known of whom include David Frum, William Kristol, Norman and John Podhoretz, Michael Ledeen, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, and the egregious Douglas Feith, as close to being a foreign agent as is possible to be but still holding on to his job at the Pentagon. America's Fifth Columnists aim to shape United States foreign policy to suit Israeli interests. The gruesome carnage in Iraq is proof that this administration is ready to fight Israeli battles to the last American marine.

We have lost more than 1,200 dead, 30,000 wounded, and have killed an unknown number of Iraqis, not all of them insurgents or terrorists. We have military hospitals full of blind and crippled young men and women, while thousands of Iraqis and their children are mortared and shot daily. Despite the bloodshed, however, victory in Iraq is still up for grabs. Not only have the neocons not bothered to apologize, they want more blood. Mind you, there are no Frums dying among our troops. Instead, they are ensconced inside the Beltway appearing on television and egging the president on to Tehran and Damascus.

In a soundbite age, "War on Terror" has a good ring to it. Once upon a time, Christian missionaries tried to vanquish "evil savages" by teaching them religion. Now we try to teach them democracy. The way America's Fifth Column operates is a simple one. It uses the charge of anti-Semitism to smear honorable conservatives who do not believe that Uncle Sam's and Israel's interests are one and the same. (The most outrageous example was when Midge Decter accused the venerable conservative Russell Kirk of anti-Semitism.) David Frum, a sleazy self-promoter, infamously painted conservative writers like Pat Buchanan, Paul Gottfried, Samuel Francis, Tom Fleming, and others as unpatriotic Americans, forgetting to mention that in his book "unpatriotic" means not serving the interests of the state of Israel. Norman Podhoretz's "World War IV" is a blueprint for an endless campaign to destroy all of Israel's enemies. Why are these bogus patriots getting away with such stuff? Alas, it is a very easy question to answer.

With 85,000 members, a staff of 165, and a \$33.4 million annual budget, AIPAC, the American Israel Political Affairs Committee, is Washington's most influential and most feared lobby. It is forceful, extremely aggressive, and more or less calls the tune inside the Beltway where the Middle East is concerned. Woe to the politician who ignores its wishes. He will be targeted, his opponents showered with donations, his reputation immediately shredded by charges of anti-Semitism.

Neocons work closely with AIPAC and the Israeli embassy. As Philip Giraldi wrote in this magazine, "Principal neocons have been accused of illegally providing classified information to

Israel. None was ever prosecuted." Last I heard AIPAC was busy accusing the FBI and the CIA of pursuing a vendetta against Israel and the Pentagon, while neocon Michael Rubin of the American Enterprise Institute alleges that the Franklin affair was motivated by anti-Semitism.

America's pro-Israel stand is nothing new. Israel is, after all, our closest ally in the region, despite the spying it regularly conducts on Uncle Sam. If there ever was a one-sided marriage, this is it. As Thomas Friedman wrote in the *New York Times*, "there is a steadily rising perception across the Arab-Muslim world that the great enemy of Islam is JIA—Jews, Israel and America, all lumped together in a single threat." Friedman goes on to say that Arab satellite television stations show split-screen images of Israelis bashing Palestinians and Americans beating up Iraqi insurgents. Nothing new here. Arab preachers, mostly paid by our other "allies," the Saudi rulers, explain all the world's ills by wrapping them up in JIA. But Arab lies and outrageous anti-Western propaganda aside, the Bush regime's total embrace of Ariel Sharon makes it impossible to know where American policy stops and Sharon's begins.

Now, with Colin Powell gone, my fears are that Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and Undersecretary Douglas Feith—two of the most bluster-prone cheerleaders of the Iraq War and of Ariel Sharon's brutal and expansionist strategy on the West Bank—will enjoy even more power and influence. Under normal circumstances, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Feith, and others would have been dismissed on the spot, and neocon propagandists such as Frum, Kristol, Podhoretz, Perle, and their ilk denounced as working for a foreign power. But we are not living in normal times. This is the time of AIPAC, and woe to those who oppose America's Fifth Column, starting with poor little me. ■

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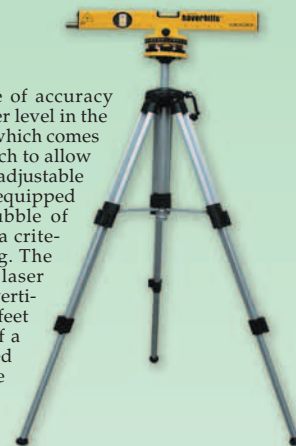
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